

10. FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING ON LAND ADJACENT TO NEW ROAD FARM, NEW ROAD, LONGNOR (NP/SM/0317/0274, 408985/361252, P2370, 18/05/2017/ALN)

APPLICANT: MR A SIMPSON

Site and Surroundings

New Road Farm is located in open countryside approximately midway between the villages of Longnor and Warslow. The farmstead sits directly adjacent to the eastern side of the B5053 road. New Road Farm itself is a tenanted farm owned by the National Park Authority

The application site is located within a field parcel that lies directly to the north of New Road farmstead but it is in separate ownership to the farm. The application site edged red is located on the western, roadside boundary of the field in question and amounts to approximately 0.2 hectares in area. Vehicular access to the application site and the wider field is gained via an existing field gate to the B5053.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a portal framed agricultural building at the southern edge of the application site. The building would measure 13.7m long by 9.1m wide by 4m high the eaves and 5.m high to the ridge. The walls would be constructed in vertical timber boarding above a concrete panelled base plinth. A dual pitched roof would be clad in pre-coated sheeting. Sliding doors would be provided in the north west facing elevation and a hardstanding area would be provided to the front of the building, together with a surfaced access track to the existing gateway.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

- 1. 3 year time limit.**
- 2. Adopt amended plans.**
- 3. Landscaping scheme to be implemented.**
- 4. Details of surfacing for access track and hardstanding to be submitted and agreed.**
- 5. Building to be removed when no longer required for agriculture.**

Key Issues

- Whether the building is agriculturally justified.
- Whether the building would conserve the landscape character of the area.
- Highway Issues.
- Impact on Residential Amenity.

History

August 1988 and December 1987 – outline applications for erection of dwelling on application site refused.

Consultations

Highway Authority – no objections. The access to the proposed agricultural building uses the existing field access. Any use of the field will require use of this access regardless of the presence of a building. It is proposed to store agricultural machinery in the building, including tractors. Agricultural vehicles could visit the site as things stand but would need to leave the site as there is no secure storage.

District Council – no response

Parish Council – recommend refusal following representations received from local residents on the following grounds:

- The residents of New Road Farm were not notified of the Planning Application and only became aware of it by seeing the yellow notice on a nearby telephone pole.
- The proposed agricultural building will spoil the view from the house.
- The proposed agricultural building will spoil two fields.
- The mother of the applicant lives on the Farm and strongly objects to the proposed build.
- The applicant owns and runs one or two HGVs and has not used the land for agricultural purposes in recent years. Concern was expressed that the building was intended for housing HGVs rather than sheep.
- The access to the land is on a dangerous bend on the B5053.
- Parish Councillors asked if the height of the building could be reduced by setting the building lower into the ground or moving the proposed building to another less intrusive location on the plot and providing bunding and native species tree screening.

Authority's Landscape Architect – no objections subject to timber cladding being brought down to ground level and the introduction of additional planting at the entrance to the site.

Representations

21 letters of support have been received raising the following points:

- There would be no impact on residential amenity.
- The access is suitable and already used for agricultural purposes. The road is not busy at this point.
- The site is an ideal location for a farm building.
- The building is needed for animal welfare purposes.
- Young people need to be encouraged into the farming industry.
- The HGV operated by the applicant is run from another location.
- The building is needed to house stock and grow the farm business.

8 letters of objection have been received raising the following points:

- The access is inadequate and would cause a severe risk to road users.
- The building would obstruct views from New Road farm and deprive the property of light.
- The tenants at New Rd Farm did not receive notification of the proposals.

- The applicant incorrectly states that the applicant is a farmer with 50 sheep. He has never kept livestock at the farm.

Main Policies

Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4, LC13, LT18

Core Strategy Policy DS1 permits, in principle, developments required for agriculture within the countryside. Policy L1 requires that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan, and other valued characteristics. Policy GSP3 explains that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings that are subject to the development proposal

Saved Local Plan policy LC13 deals specifically with agricultural developments and it is permissive provided they are close to the main group of buildings wherever possible and relate well to them. Such development must avoid harm to the areas valued characteristics including local views, making use of the least obtrusive or otherwise damaging location and must not require obtrusive access tracks, roads or services.

Local Plan Policy LC4 requires that the detailed treatments of development is of a high standard that respects, conserves and where possible enhances the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area.

Further guidance is given in the Authority's SPD on Agricultural Developments. This states that if adequate justification is not supplied, then applications may be refused.

National Planning Policy Framework

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.

Assessment

For clarity, with regard to comments made by objectors about procedure, in addition to the standard site notice, the occupier of New Road Farm was also consulted individually by letter and they have made written representations on the proposals. Moreover, during the course of the application it was discovered that the applicant's father, rather than the applicant, was the owner of the land. As a result the application was invalidated, the correct certificate ownership was then completed and submitted and the application was duly re-advertised.

Issue 1: Whether the building is agriculturally justified.

The details initially submitted with the application explained that the applicant has been farming for the last 10 years, and currently runs a flock of 50 sheep across his holding. He owns the 4 acres of land which make up the field parcel in which the application site sits and he rents a further 14 acres of land on a long term agreement at Gradbach. At present there are no buildings on any of the land farmed and a building is required for lambing and for the storage of fodder and agricultural machinery and equipment.

When officers conducted the site visit there were no sheep in the applicant's ownership on the field where the building is proposed, although there were some sheep visible on the land at Gradbach.

As a result, and following concerns raised by objectors, officers requested further clarification with regard to the agricultural business and need. Additional information has been provided which states that the applicant is an agricultural contractor and also works on a nearby farm part-time. He has an agricultural background (via his grandfather) and works in agriculture locally. He has a full time job elsewhere but wishes to develop his agricultural business. A receipt for the purchase of 22 sheep in September 2016 has been submitted. It is stated that most of the sheep and the machinery are currently kept on land belonging to friends. The equipment owned amounts to 2 tractors and various trailers.

On the basis of this information it is clear that any agricultural business currently operated by the applicant is at a fairly low key level. However on the evidence provided it is considered, on balance, that there is a reasonable requirement for a building to house the stock in ownership and to provide cover for the machinery that is said to be owned. Consequently it is considered that the principle of erecting a replacement agricultural building in the proposed position complies with policies DS1 and LC13.

Issue 2 - Whether the building would conserve the landscape character of the area.

With regard to the Authority's Adopted Landscape Strategy, the application site falls within the upland pastures landscape character type within the south west peak. This is an upland pastoral landscape with a traditional dispersed pattern of gritstone farmsteads. It is a peaceful rural landscape with open views to surrounding higher ground. Identified priorities for this landscape type include the management of the dispersed and historic settlement patterns of development.

The proposed building would be located approximately 6m away from the northern boundary of the curtilage of New Road Farm. As such, when travelling south along the B5053, whilst the building would be visible adjacent to the road, it would be seen against the backdrop and in the context of the existing buildings at New Road Farm. From the south the building would be largely screened by the existing structures at the farm. The building would be relatively modest in size and would not be particularly high, at 4m to the eaves and it is not considered, in terms of its location and massing, that it would have a harmful impact on the landscape character of the area. Furthermore the building would be partially screened by the existing roadside hedgerow and amended plans have been received which show 3 additional trees to be planted at the entrance to the site to further mitigate its impact when viewed from the road.

With regard to detailing, amended plans have now been received to show the vertical timber boarding brought down to ground level, which would simplify the design and therefore reduce the visual impact.

Subject to a condition to require the submission and agreement of a sample of the surface treatment for the track and the hardstanding area, it is considered that the proposed development would conserve the landscape character of the area and would not compromise the priorities identified in the landscape strategy in accordance with policy L1 and policy LC13.

Issue 3 - Highway Issues

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

The submitted plans show that the existing field gateway would be utilised to gain access to the proposed building. Visibility from the access to the south is somewhat restricted by a bend in the road. However the Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposals on the basis that the land is already in agricultural use and the proposals are unlikely to lead to a significant intensification of the use of the access. On that basis it is considered that the development would be served by a safe and suitable access in accordance with policy LT18.

Issue 4 – Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed building would be relatively close to the existing farmhouse at New Road Farm, a property which is in separate ownership to the land in question. The south facing wall of the building would be around 6m away from the northern boundary of the curtilage of the property and approximately 15m away from the house itself. Between the house and the application site there is a garage/store building which would provide a degree of separation between the two developments. In addition the doors and the proposed hardstanding to the proposed farm building would face away from the house, thus reducing the potential for any noise and disturbance. Officers have visited New Road farm and can confirm that the only window facing north directly towards the proposed farm building is a small first floor bathroom window on the gable end of the farmhouse, which is obscure glazed. As this is not a habitable room window it is not considered that the proposed building would cause harm to amenity by means of overshadowing or overlooking. The kitchen window to the farmhouse faces east over open fields and as a result the proposed building would not block light into this room.

There is an area of land on the north side of the house (between the house and the site for the proposed shed) which is grassed. Although it does not appear to be used as 'garden' area at the moment, it is within the residential curtilage of the property and could potentially be used as such. However, whilst the proposed building would block views northwards from this area, there would still remain an open aspect to the east and the fact that this is not the only area of domestic curtilage at New House Farm that can be enjoyed by the occupiers is a material consideration. In conclusion, it is not considered that the proposed building would be harmful to the amenity or privacy of the adjacent property at New House farm in accordance with policies GSP3 and LC4.

Other Considerations

The Parish Council has raised concerns about whether the building is agriculturally justified and whether it would, in fact, be used in connection with the applicant's occupation as a HGV driver. It is considered that a condition to require the removal of the building should it no longer be used or required for agricultural purposes is necessary and reasonable in this case to ensure that the building is used for agricultural purposes only, as intended.

Conclusion

On balance, it is considered that it has been demonstrated that there is a reasonable requirement for a farm building on the application site. Subject to the proposed landscaping, the scale and design of the proposed building as amended would conserve the character and appearance of the area. Due to the disposition of openings on the farmhouse at New Road Farm and the presence of the intervening garage/store it is not considered that there would be a significant impact on residential amenity. It is considered that given the proposed agricultural use, the development would be served by a safe and suitable access. The application is therefore in accordance with adopted policies and is recommended for approval.

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