

**AGENDA ITEM No. 7**

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING

30 MARCH 2007

HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICE

PART A

1. **PLANNING APPLICATION – RE-LOCATION OF COACH (PSV) OPERATING CENTRE AND GARAGE, ERECTION OF NEW COACH STATION AND GARAGE INCLUDING NEW VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AT GOLDEN GREEN GARAGE, BARROW MOOR, LONGNOR (P8102, 03.11.06, NP/SM/1106/1010 405928/364477/RJB)**

**Proposal**

- 1 This planning application was considered at the meeting of the Planning Committee on the 16 February 2007. The application involves the demolition of existing garage premises and the development of new premises in an adjacent field in the open countryside. The site of the existing garage would be landscaped and form a paddock serving the remaining dwelling, which is a converted barn. The Committee were minded to grant the application, contrary to the officer recommendation. The application has been referred to the Authority meeting on the basis that it is contrary to policies in the Structure and Local Plan
- 2 The report to the Planning Committee is attached as an Appendix. Representations received after the report was compiled have been added.

3 **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be REFUSED for the following reason**

**Proposals would have a detrimental impact on landscape character as a result of the increase in scale of the proposed garage and coach operating centre and its prominent position in the landscape. In these respects, the proposal would be contrary to policies GS1, C2, C5, LS4, E1, LC4 and LE4 in the Structure and Local Plans**

**Policy Considerations**

- 4 The Planning Committee report explains that the proposal is in open countryside and contrary to strategic policies in the Structure and Local Plan which aim to protect the landscape character from development. In particular, policy LE4 states that outside settlements, expansion of existing industrial and business development will not be permitted unless it is of a modest scale in relation to the existing activity and/or building and does not extend the physical limits of the established use, it does not harm the character of the area and proper consideration is given to the possibilities of using existing buildings to meet the needs of the business.
- 5 In this case the extension is for approximately a 500% increase in floor space over the existing garage. It is the officer view that this is clearly not a modest extension and contrary to policy LE4 in addition to strategic policies.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED BY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **Alternative Sites**

- 6 The Committee asked that the availability of alternative industrial sites which may accommodate this development be explored. Consultations have been carried out with High Peak Borough Council Economic Development Department which confirm two units are available in Buxton, including a vacant warehouse unit (1112 sq metres) at the Harpur Hill Industrial Estate and a unit(315 sq. metres)at Staden Hill on Ashbourne Road . There is also vacant accommodation which appears suitable for the applicant's needs more remotely at the former Bowers Coaches depot in Chapel-en-le-Frith and land adjacent to the train station in New Mills.
- 7 The applicant has responded to the suggestion that there are these alternative sites which are available in the locality. The applicant states that these sites would not allow the business to serve the local community. A school bus is operated from all the surrounding villages close to the current site in the Staffordshire Moorlands and relocation would make it impossible to serve these villages with the easy access currently enjoyed. The majority of employees live within 3 miles of the garage and five diversified farmers rely totally on employment at the garage.
- 8 The applicant states further the breakdown service would not be readily accessible from an industrial estate in Buxton or New Mills.
- 9 The applicant points to the contribution the new garage would make to sustaining local employment and services and the support for the proposal from local Parish Councils and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

### **Measures to mitigate the impact on the landscape**

- 10 The applicant has agreed to the following extra measures requested for investigating by the Planning Committee to mitigate the environmental impact of the development:
1. A green((Sedum) roof can be used to blend the building into the landscape more effectively, although the agent considers that seen from a distance it would not look any more natural than mat green coloured metal sheeting and have a shorter life span.
  2. Agree to extra landscape screening which could be a planning condition.
  3. Porous yard paving can be used on 50% of the proposed "hard surfaced area". This would create a more sustainable drainage solution and yet allow safeguards, in certain areas of the site, against the possibility of oil spillages and seepages into the natural drainage system.

### **Conclusion**

- 11 It is the officer view that there are strong policy objections to this proposal as expressed in the Planning Committee report. The site is readily visible in an open landscape setting and despite the sinking of the building into the slope of the site and the extra mitigating measures offered by the applicant, the building and its associated activities including substantial open storage, will be readily visible and harm the landscape character. A 500% increase in floor area is untenable in policy terms.

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- 12 The applicants business offers local employment and provides sustainable school transport in a good location to serve local villages. However, the duty to care for the social and economic welfare of the inhabitants of the Park should be secondary to the need to protect the landscape character where there is a conflict. In accordance with development plan policies coach and bus services should be operated from established settlements. There are sites available within adjacent settlements which are more remote from the villages currently served by the applicant. Whilst these locations are not as beneficial in terms of transportation, again, this has to be balanced against the sustainability benefits of landscape protection.
- 13 Officers are concerned that if this proposal were granted it could set a precedent whereby similar large scale extensions of business activity in the open countryside, such as the adjacent site operated by Clowes Coaches, would be difficult to resist.
- 14 If the Authority wishes to approve the application, it would have to be referred to the Secretary of State as a departure from the development plans to allow scope for consideration of the need to “call in the application.
- 15 If, members wish to grant the application then the following conditions are recommended :
1. Before the development is brought into use the existing buildings shall be removed and a landscaping scheme be submitted and approved to determine the treatment of the land.
  2. Development carried out in accordance with amended plans
  3. The permission shall relate only to the use stated and no other use within B2 of the Use Classes Order 1995
  4. Details of a sedum roof and porous drainage to the vehicular circulation areas be submitted for approval
  5. General drainage details
  6. Conditions recommended by the Environment Agency to protect against land contamination
  7. Highway conditions as recommended by SCC Highways Service
  8. Coaches to be stored within the building at night
  9. All lighting to be agreed with L.P.A.

**APPENDIX**

**Background**

1 None

**Resources**

2 None

**Risk Management**

3 None

**Human Rights, Equalities, Health & Safety**

4 None

**Consultees**

5 High Peak Borough Council Economic Development Department and standard technical consultations on planning applications

**Enclosures**

6 Report to Planning Committee 16/2/07

**List of Background Papers** (not previously published)

7 All documents on planning application file

**Report Author**

8 Bob Bryan Head of Planning

**Publication date**

9 Thursday 22 March 2007