

12. FULL APPLICATION – CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DWELLING AT MANIFOLD FARM, BUXTON ROAD, WETTON – (NP/SM/0719/0818, ALN)

APPLICANT: MR A GILMAN

Summary

1. It has been demonstrated that there is a functional requirement for a second dwelling on the farmstead and the financial test has been satisfied. Nonetheless the proposed siting of the dwelling on elevated land on the edge of the village means that the dwelling would break the skyline and it would not relate well to the other buildings on the farm. Consequently the proposals would cause harm to the valued landscape character of the National Park.

Site and Surroundings

2. Manifold Farm is located on the southern edge of the village of Wetton. It is a large mixed dairy and beef farm with 48.5 hectares owned and 44.5 hectares rented on a 'succession' tenancy from Chatsworth Estate.
3. The site is located outside of the Wetton Conservation Area. A public right of way runs in a north-south orientation along the western side of the farm building group.
4. Accommodation at the site currently consists of a detached farmhouse which was erected following planning permission granted in 1978. The house is located at the northern corner of the farm building group. There is a significant range of modern farm buildings arranged to the south of the farmhouse.

Proposal

5. Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a second agricultural workers dwelling. The dwelling would be located within a field parcel beyond the south western edge of the existing farm building group.
6. The dwelling would be single storey, with an L-shaped footprint. It would have three bedrooms. It would be constructed in natural limestone with gritstone quoins, under a blue clay tiled roof. Two parking spaces would be provided to the east of the dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. **The proposed dwelling, by virtue of its siting on elevated land would be highly prominent above the skyline on the approach to the village from the north and from nearby public rights of way and would appear isolated and unrelated to surrounding development. Consequently the development would cause harm to the landscape character of the area contrary to Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP3 and L1 and Development Management policies DMH4 and DMC3.**

Key Issues

- Whether there is genuine and essential functional need for the second dwelling.
- Whether the financial test is met.
- Siting and Landscape Impact.

History

December 1978 – planning permission granted for erection of farm workers dwelling.

November 1978 – planning permission granted for erection of farm building.

1988 – planning permission granted for erection of agricultural building.

December 1995 – planning permission granted for erection of agricultural building

September 2008 – prior notification application granted for proposed agricultural building extension to store fodder.

August 2014 – prior notification application granted for agricultural building to store fodder and implements.

September 2018 – enquiry submitted with regard to the current proposals. Officers advised that whilst the functional and financial tests could be met, that the proposed siting would could cause harm to the landscape character of the area.

September 2019 – planning application submitted for agricultural building to house and feed cattle, and to store fodder and implements (decision not yet issued).

Consultations

Highway Authority – no objections

District Council – no response

Parish Council – supports the application. The applicant is a supportive member of the community assisting with snow clearance and other essential tasks. Keeping local families resident in the parish is welcomed.

Representations

Eight letters of support have been received from members of the local community. They raise the following points (in summary):

The provision of suitable housing for the farming community/local people is essential.

There are too many holiday cottages and 2nd homes in the village.

The building design is unobtrusive and in keeping.

A single storey dwelling would provide flexible accommodation suitable for older family members in the future.

The continuation of farming is important to the vitality of the village.

Villages need a core of permanent residents to create and support the longevity of the community.

The full text of all letters is available to view on the Authority's website.

7. Main Policies

8. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1, HC1, HC2, CC1

9. Relevant Local Plan policies: DMC3, DMH4, DMT8

National Planning Policy Framework

10. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the East Midlands Regional Plan 2009, 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.'
11. Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
12. Paragraph 79 states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless certain circumstances apply, including that there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

Development Plan

13. Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP2 and GSP3 together say that all development in the National Park must be consistent with the National Park's legal purposes and duty and that the Sandford Principle will be applied where there is conflict. Opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon and development which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted. Particular attention will be paid to impact on the character and setting of buildings, siting, landscaping and building materials, design in accordance with the Design Guide and the impact upon living conditions of local communities. Core Strategy policy GSP4 highlights that the National Park Authority will consider using planning conditions or obligations to secure the achievement of its spatial outcomes.
14. Core Strategy policy HC1 allows, as an exception, housing that provides for key workers in agriculture, forestry or other rural enterprises.
15. Core Strategy policy HC2 states that housing for key workers in agriculture must be justified by functional and financial tests; wherever possible must be provided by re-using existing buildings and will be tied to the land holding or rural enterprise for which it is declared to be needed.
16. 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.
17. Core Strategy policy CC1 requires development to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land and resources, to take account of the energy hierarchy, to achieve the highest standards of carbon reduction and water efficiency, and to be directed away from flood risk areas.

18. Development Management policy DMH4 states that the need for a worker dwelling to support agriculture, forestry or other rural enterprise businesses will be considered against the needs of the business concerned. Development will be permitted by conversion or new build provided that there is a functional need for the dwelling. The policy also gives criteria for assessing whether the business is financially viable. The policy requires that there is no other suitable accommodation available in the locality including by conversion of a traditional building; that construction costs reflect the income of the business and that the new building is within or immediately adjacent to the site of the existing building group and enhances the building group when considered in its landscape setting. The policy also requires that the dwelling is smaller than any house in the building group that is already under the control of the business and in accordance with policy DMH5, unless an acceptable landscape and building conservation outcome for the building group and the setting can only be achieved by a bigger building.
19. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.
20. Development Management Policy DMT8 states that off-street parking for residential development should be provided unless it can be demonstrated that on-street parking meets highways standards and does not negatively impact on the visual and other amenity of the local community. It notes that the design and number of parking spaces must respect the valued characteristics of the area, particularly in conservation areas

Assessment

21. The National Park Authority's Core Strategy policy HC1 B allows for the provision of housing for key workers in agriculture. Policy HC2 states that such housing must be justified by functional and financial tests.

Whether there is genuine and essential functional need for the second dwelling.

22. An agricultural appraisal has been submitted with the application. This explains that the farm enterprise currently has a herd of 230 head of dairy cattle and approximately 100 head of beef cattle. A 'standard man days' calculation estimates that there is a labour requirement for seven full time and one part time worker. However the report acknowledges that this calculation is excessive and does not reflect the actual labour required to operate the business. At present there are two full time workers on the farm (the applicant and his son law) with the applicants partner and daughter working part time and this is considered to be adequate to meet the needs of the business.
23. Offices are satisfied, in consultation with the Authority's land agent, that the appraisal demonstrates a needs for at least 2 full time workers to be within reasonable sight and sound of the animals during the day and night and that as the applicant and his daughter/son in law do not form part of the same household, they need to live in two separate houses. At present the applicant (the owner of the business) currently lives with his partner in rented accommodation within Wetton village. His daughter and son in law and their two children live in the existing farmhouse at Manifold Farm.
24. The anomaly with this proposal is that Manifold farm, unlike most farms, is located on the edge of the village of Wetton and as such there is an existing stock of houses close by that could potentially meet the identified need. Indeed the applicant is currently living in a house within a couple of minutes' drive of the farm, and has done for some time. If the

applicant owned the house he is living in then we do not consider that it would be unreasonable for him to live in the village and to drive the short distance to the farm should an animal be in need of tending during night time hours. However the crucial point is that the applicant is living in rented accommodation at The Old Sunday School and it has been demonstrated through a letter from the landlord that there is no security of tenure on the property. As a result, if the applicant and his partner were to be asked to leave the property at short notice and there was nowhere else available in the village, then this would cause problems to the proper functioning of the farm business.

25. It has been demonstrated through a search that at present there appear to be no other properties for sale within the village within a price range that could be supported by the business. Consequently we conclude that there is a genuine need for a second dwelling on the farmstead.

Whether the financial test is met

26. Development Management policy DMH4 states that in order to be satisfied that stated intentions to engage in or further develop the business are genuine, reasonably likely to happen and capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time, the Authority will require financial evidence that the business has been operating for a least 3 years; and the business is currently profitable and has been profitable for one of the last three years; and profit for the business is such that it can sustain the cost of the dwelling.
27. Financial accounts have been provided that demonstrate that the business has been profitable for the last 4 financial years and we are satisfied that the profit from the business could sustain the cost of the dwelling.
28. Given that the functional and financial tests have been satisfied the main remaining consideration is the impact of the siting and design of the dwelling on the landscape character of the National Park.

Siting and Landscape Impact

29. Firstly policy DMH4 requires that where a new building is proposed, there is no traditional building that could be converted within or close to the main group of buildings. In this case the existing farmhouse and the main group of modern farm buildings on the site are within the applicants ownership, with the main block of owned farmland then extending to the south. The land abutting the farmstead to the east and west including land on which some of the farm buildings are located is within the ownership of the Chatsworth Estate. There is only one traditional building within the farm group and this is a small single storey stone barn on the eastern side of the farmstead and on land owned by Chatsworth. We consider that the building is too small to convert to a single dwelling without extension, which in itself would harm the character and appearance if the building,
30. Policies GSP3, L1 and DMC3 all seek to achieve development to a high design standard that respects the landscape character of the area. In particular DMC3 (ix) states that visual context provided within the Landscape strategy together with other specific views including skylines must be carefully considered.
31. The chosen site for the new build dwelling is located within an area of agricultural land to the south west of the building group. At present the western boundary of the farmstead is demarked by an access track and with groups of trees. The piece of land in question is located to the west of the access track and therefore beyond the existing footprint of the farmstead.

32. Manifold Farm is located on rising land. The land rises up from Buxton Road and the village, southwards, and the application site is located close to the crest of the hill. As such, although the proposed building would be single storey and would be dug into the ground to some extent, it would still be highly prominent projecting above the skyline when viewed on the approach to the village from the west.
33. On the advice of officers the agent has produce a Visual Impact Assessment and this has been submitted with the application. This acknowledges that the building would project above the skyline from a 300m stretch of Leek Road and also from the public right of way (Thors Lane) that runs to Thors Cave, but it argues that because of the distances involved and the simplicity of the design of the building, the dwelling would not be prominent and the degree of separation from the existing farm buildings is comparable with other recently completed farm workers dwelling in the National Park.
34. Officers do not concur with this conclusion. Because of the prevailing topography and the presence of mature trees on the western edge of Wetton, the majority of the built form of the village does not become readily apparent when approaching from the west, until one is almost within the village envelope. The large portal framed sheds at Manifold Farm are well screened both by the land levels and the trees along the western boundary of the site. The open pastoral landscape that surrounds Manifold Farm and Wetton village contributes strongly to the character of the area. The area falls within the Limestone Village farmlands landscape character type within the Authority's Landscape Strategy. Settlement patterns within this landscape type tend to be strongly nucleated and the protection of this pattern is identified as a priority throughout the landscape character type. The proposed dwelling would be intrude into the open fields that surround the farm and would be visually separate from the existing buildings. Its projection above an otherwise uninterrupted skyline on this hillside beyond the edge of the village is considered to be harmful and in conflict with the Strategy.
35. The agent has attempted to address these concerns by 'digging in' the dwelling as far as possible, by limiting the amount of windows on the west facing elevation to avoid light spill and by proposing new planting to the south and east of the building. Whilst the planting would help to mitigate the impact of the building in the long term, it would take many years to develop and so in the short to medium term there would be unacceptable harm to landscape character.
36. Aside from the issues of siting, the overall design details of the dwelling are acceptable. Whilst the Authority's Design Guide discourages bungalows, the proposed dwelling would not have the wide plan form of a modern bungalow. Instead it would have relatively narrow gable widths and a detailing that is more reflective of a stone shippon. Notwithstanding the effort that has gone into appropriate design, this does not negate the impact that a building in the setting would have on the undeveloped landscape.
37. At the pre-application stage alternative sites were identified and assessed by officers as follows:
38. Site A – adjacent to existing farmhouse. We identified that this would be the least harmful in landscape terms because of its close relationship with the other buildings on the site, however it was clear that there is an underground slurry store close by which the agent states would need a 7m buffer; there is a public right of way running through the area; and due to the need to maintain access for milk tankers, the area of land available is limited.
39. Site B – strip of land with frontage onto Buxton Rd. This is a narrow plot of land and any dwelling sited here would face directly onto the modern farm buildings and as a result

amenity would be compromised. The area also provide a valuable visual buffer between the farm complex and the edge of the Conservation Area.

40. Site C – triangle of land on the eastern boundary. This are is currently visually intrusive due to the dumping of large quantities of waste material in the area. Because of the limited space available the dwelling would need to be 2 storey and from Carr Lane to the east the dwelling would break the skyline and would also appear quite detached from the adjacent farm buildings.
41. In conclusion officers are satisfied that there is not a more suitable site available elsewhere on the farmstead. Nonetheless a dwelling on the chosen site would cause harm to the landscape character of the area contrary to adopted policies.
42. Whilst the Authority has a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities, its statutory purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the park and the law requires that this must take priority. In this case, whilst the applicant has gone to considerable lengths work with officers to identify an appropriate site, the chosen site would nonetheless detract from the landscape of the National Park and its largely undeveloped character, eroding openness and creating sprawl. Unfortunately, the needs of the farming business do not outweigh the harm to landscape that has been identified.
43. With regard to the other farm workers dwelling approvals that the agent has referred to, each application must be judged on its merits and they cannot be directly compared to the current proposals. The landscape impact for each of those proposals was clearly assessed and judged to be acceptable in those particular landscapes. It is not considered that those decisions can carry weight in favour of the current proposals.

Other Considerations

Access and Parking

44. The existing access onto the public highway would be utilised and visibility from the access is adequate. Two parking spaces would be provided within the curtilage of the dwelling which would serve the needs of the development.

Amenity Impacts

45. The nearest neighbouring residential properties to the proposed dwelling would be some 160m to the north and so as a result of the distances involved it is concluded that there would be no adverse impact upon the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.

Environmental Management

46. At the pre-application stage officers advised that an Environmental Management statement should be submitted with the application. Whilst a detailed statement has not been submitted a short section is included within the Design and Access Statement. This states that the dwelling will exceed standard requirements from Building Regulations for energy efficiency and that the dwelling would be heated by an air source heat pump supplemented by a carbon neutral wood burning stove. The submitted plans show that the air source heat pump would be fixed to the south east elevation of the dwellinghouse. Subject to a condition that requires the pump to be constructed prior to first occupation the proposals would meet the requirements of policy CC1.

47. Conclusion

48. In conclusion officers are satisfied that there is a functional need for a second dwelling and the financial test has been met. There is not a more suitable site available elsewhere on the farmstead, nor an existing building suitable for conversion. Nonetheless a dwelling on the chosen site would cause harm to the landscape character of the National Park, contrary to adopted policies. It is not considered that the identified needs of the individual business outweigh the landscape harm that has been identified. Accordingly the application is contrary to policies GSP1, GSP3, L1, DMH4 and DMC3 and is recommended for refusal.

Human Rights

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

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

50. Nil

51. **Report Author:** Andrea Needham, Senior Planner (South)