
11. FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF 2 AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS, CLIFFE HOUSE FARM, BRADFIELD (NP/S/1214/1273, P.1252, 427668 / 391738, 09/02/2015/JK)

APPLICANT: MR WILLIAM HAGUE

Site and Surroundings

Cliffe House Farm is located in an elevated position on the northern slope of the Loxley Valley above Damflask Reservoir and about 1.1km to the south-east of High Bradfield. The farm comprises a recently erected modern agricultural shed and a smaller range of older sheds and sits close to the edge of an escarpment on the hillside. Immediately to the south of the agricultural buildings there are two detached dwellings, Hill Top and the original Cliffe House Farmhouse, both of which are in separate ownership. There are two accesses serving the building group. The first is via a narrow track off Loxley Road to the south west. This serves the dwellings and the farm buildings and also carries a public footpath which runs past the south side of the new farm building into the fields east of the farm. The second and main access for the farm buildings comes down off Kirk Edge Road to the north and also carries a public footpath which links with one running west to east through the site.

To the north, east and south east of the site there are large fields used for cereal production which form part of the larger land holding of about 1200 acres of which 795 acres are in cereal production with 414 acres are grass and grazing.

From the west the land falls away from the site and on this side the building group is partly screened by a combination of the landform, tree cover on the slopes of the escarpment and by a stand of mature trees on the south west corner of the building group. In these views only the gable end of the new shed is visible but it does not extend above the height of adjacent trees and is dark coloured. From Kirk Edge Road to the north the new building is clearly visible as a strident feature in the foreground due to its large scale and long length which is only partly screened by a row of *leylandii* trees alongside it. In this view the original building group is largely hidden behind the new shed. The proposed site for the new buildings comprises a roughly rectangular area of field (about 100m by 75m) immediately to the north of the existing new farm building and adjacent to the main access into the farmyard from Kirk Edge Road.

In more distant views across the valley from the south the older farm buildings and houses in the group can be seen on the escarpment with the new shed standing behind. Those buildings partly mask the new building which although obviously large, at this range is not intrusive in the wider landscape as its dark colour and the fact that it is below the skyline help to mitigate the impact. In closer views of the site along the footpath from the east the building group is dominated by the large scale of the gable end of the new building which dwarfs the scale and low form of the traditional dwellings seen in the rest of the building group.

Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of two further agricultural sheds, one to house cattle and the other for grain and other general agricultural storage purposes in connection with the holding (e.g. storage of different grains, fertiliser, straw, chemicals and implements). The buildings would be sited immediately to the north and at right angles to the existing large modern shed. The ground rises to the north of that shed and it is proposed that this would be excavated so that the new buildings would be set into the ground by up to 12m at the northern end to achieve the same floor level as the existing shed. As a result of lowering the buildings into the site in this way the ridge heights at the northern gable ends would be at or close to ground level.

The southern gable ends of the new buildings would be spaced off from the existing shed by 25m and 10m to create a yard area and leave space to access the field to the east respectively. Each building would have a footprint identical to the existing shed of 27m wide by 75m long (1963m²) with the building to the east having a 10m ridge height and the one to the west having a 12.7m ridge height matching that of the existing shed. Materials for the eastern building would be concrete panelled walls with tanalised Yorkshire boarding above under a dark green coloured profile sheet roof laid to 15 degrees. The building to the west would be similar construction but with dark green coloured profile sheet walling instead of Yorkshire boarding. Doors would be roller shutter style and it is intended that the exposed concrete panel walls would be painted dark green to match the finish similarly employed on the existing building to good effect.

The plans have been amended since submission in respect of increased landscaping. These show that some of the excavated material would be reused to remodel the banking off the eastern gable of the existing building and would also be extended northwards to form a low bund up the eastern edge of the excavated site. This would then be planted to form a 15m wide shelter belt of trees and hedging from the east gable of the existing shed up around the new buildings to the access road. Further planting is shown extending the existing tree planting on the bankside to the west across the access track from the buildings which is shown expanded both to the north and southwards. The small stand of mature trees in the SW corner of the yard would also have its eroded and missing boundary walling reinstated to provide protection to them.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions or modifications.

- 1. Statutory three year time limit for implementation.**
- 2. Development to be carried out in accordance with specified approved plans.**
- 3. Full implementation and maintenance thereafter of the submitted landscaping scheme with the bunding completed before the buildings are brought into use and all tree planting completed by the end of the first available planting season following the substantial completion of the buildings and the bunding. Precise details of the bunding down the east side to be clarified by submission and agreement of a further amended plan before works commence (unless amended plans are received in time for and adopted by the meeting).**
- 4. Excess spoil not used in the landscaping scheme to be disposed of via licensed waste operator.**
- 5. Buildings to be used for agricultural purposes in connection with the associated land and when no longer required for those purposes the buildings shall be removed and the land reinstated to its former contours and use.**
- 6. The concrete panelling on the southern gable ends and the exposed east and west facing walling of the sheds shall be painted a dark colour within one month of the completion of the building works.**
- 7. The metal roof and wall sheeting to the buildings shall be pre-coloured dark green**

- 8. All fencing shown to protect the line and users of the public footpath through the yard as shown on the amended drawings shall be completed before any work starts on the construction. Thereafter the segregation of the path from the yard and track shall be permanently so maintained throughout the lifetime of the approved development.**

Key Issues

- Whether having regard to local and national policy, the material considerations in this case would amount to the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify major development in the Peak District National Park.
- The landscape impact of the proposed development.
- Other material considerations include access issues, the amenity of neighbouring houses and the impact on the setting of the listed building at Fair Flatts Farm together with any potential impact upon biodiversity.

Planning History

2012 – Approval for Demolition of a collection of existing concrete framed agricultural buildings at Cliffe House Farm and provision of a single replacement steel framed agricultural building with associated vehicle turning area and associated landscaping. This building was completed in 2014. (NP/S/0712/725)

2013 – Approval for Discharge of condition 4 – Landscaping scheme for the 2012 approval

2014 – Pre-application advice from officers lends qualified support for the principle of additional farm buildings at the site subject to a comprehensive landscaping scheme to demonstrate that the development could be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape.

Consultations

Sheffield City Council

Rights of Way Officer – The proposal does not physically obstruct the nearby public footpaths, however does raise the following concerns :

- 1) The access off Kirk Edge Road is also a public footpath and these additional barns will result in more farm traffic by large vehicles. Questions if the current track is suitable for this increase and whether the surface of the track is suitable for this extra use and not detrimental to its public use. Notes there is a particular danger area where vehicles turn in and out of the new yard area and onto the new track and suggests it may be useful to require the provision of a segregated footpath (protected by bollards or a fence) alongside the track from a point where the new yard commences to where the footpath meets the footpath running west to east.
- 2) The additional planting proposed in the south east corner near to the public footpath. Requests that no planting is done any closer than 3m to the public footpath.
- 3) Any damage to the public footpath in this same location should be made good and the path enhanced so as to have a firm surface and at a level that does not hold water.

Bradfield Parish Council

No objections providing that all planning rules are followed.

PDNPA Landscape Architect

No objections in principle subject to incorporation of additional tree and hedge planting to mitigate the landscape impact of these large buildings.

Representations

4 letters of representation have been received to date which include one from the Loxley Valley Protection Society. All object to the application for the reasons summarised below, with most also commenting that the existing building constructed last year is out of keeping with the local built environment and has a significant landscape impact. One also raises matters of process which are not reported below as they relate to the previous application. All the letters can be read in full on the Authority's website.

1. The buildings completely dwarf the original farm buildings.
2. The design is more appropriate to an industrial estate than this attractive valley. Even where local industrial developments have taken place it has involved building on a traditional scale, not like these huge factory scale buildings.
3. The buildings will totally dominate the adjacent footpaths.
4. Applicants wrongly state that the buildings will not be visible from public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land which is not the case. The buildings will be clearly visible from two adjacent footpaths and also from Kirk Edge Road.
5. The buildings will be visible from the far side of the valley.
6. Nowhere else in the upper valley is there any similar developments.
7. Concerned that the existing new shed has set a precedent for further similar-sized buildings in this current application.
8. The application states that no additional parking will be required, however it also states that they plan to take on four new staff members and due to the lack of public transport in the vicinity, additional parking would be required.
9. The buildings are being erected within the curtilage of a grade II listed barn at Fair Flatts Farm. (Officer Note: The buildings are not within the curtilage of the listed building which is one field away and in a different planning unit and ownership, however they are in the setting of the building)
10. None of the submitted images submitted with the planning application show the view from the east. (Officer note: Plans do show the eastern elevation)
11. There are believed to be badger setts on land adjacent to the proposed development.
12. These planned industrial sized units do not comply with PDNPA goals / mission statement.

One letter is from the Loxley Valley Protection Society, which objects to this application on the following grounds as well as supporting the grounds raised by the other objectors.

- i) The existing new structure can be seen for miles around, where it stands out on the

skyline and its scale is incongruous in the landscape.

- ii) To allow two more, on this scale, would be folly and set a precedent for massive agricultural structures, in what is a sensitive and well protected landscape of rare natural beauty.

Main Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out core planning principles including supporting sustainable economic development and high standards of design taking into account the roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty within the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities.

Paragraph 28 in the NPPF says that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. It goes on to state that to promote a strong rural economy planning policies should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas through well designed new buildings as well as promote the development and diversification of agricultural businesses.

Paragraph 115 in the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks along with the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.

The application is for two agricultural buildings within the National Park amounting to a total floor space of 3,926 square metres and therefore constitutes “major” development in a ‘designated area’ as defined within the NPPF. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that;

“Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

Development Plan

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

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4, LC6, LC13, and LT18

Relevant policies in the Development Plan are consistent with national planning policies in the NPPF because they promote sustainable agricultural development in the Peak District (including proposals for new buildings) where it is consistent with the conservation and enhancement of the National Park’s scenic beauty, cultural heritage and wildlife interests.

Policy GSP1 relates back to the Park's statutory purposes and states that applications for major development within the National Park will only be permitted following rigorous consideration of the criteria in national policy. Where a proposal for major development can demonstrate a significant net benefit, every effort to mitigate potential localised harm and compensate for any residual harm would be expected to be secured. Policy GSP2 builds upon this by stating that opportunities should be taken to enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park and, (in part D) specific opportunities should be taken to remove undesirable features or buildings. This is expanded in policy L1 which relates directly to enhancement of landscape character, and policy L3 relating to the conservation and enhancement of features of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance.

Policy GSP3 refers to development management principles. Relevant criteria listed in this policy relate to appropriate scale of development in relation to the character and appearance of the National Park, impact on access and traffic, and impact on living conditions of communities.

Policy GSP4 recommends the use of conditions and legal agreements to ensure that benefits and enhancement are achieved.

In particular Local Plan Policy LC13: Agricultural or forestry operational development states that new agricultural buildings and associated working spaces will be permitted provided that they are a) close to the main group of buildings wherever possible and in all cases relate well to and make best use of existing buildings, trees, walls and other landscape features; and b) respect the design, scale, mass and colouring of existing buildings and building traditions characteristic of the area, reflecting this as far as possible in their own design; and c) avoid harm to the area's valued characteristics including important local views, making use of the least obtrusive or otherwise damaging possible location; and d) do not require obtrusive access tracks, roads or services.

L1 says that all development must conserve and where possible enhance the landscape character of the National Park, as identified by the Authority's Landscape Strategy and Action Plan. GSP3 and LC4 require all development to be of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the character, appearance and amenity of the site (or buildings) its setting and that of neighboring properties. LT18 states that safe access is a pre-requisite for any development within the National Park.

Assessment

The main issues in the determination of this application are firstly whether, having regard to local and national policy, the material considerations in this case would amount to the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify major development in the Peak District National Park. The second main issue is whether the scale of development can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape. Other material considerations include the suitability of the access and the impacts upon the footpath, the setting of a nearby listed building (Fair Flatts farm) and the amenity of nearby dwellings together with any impacts upon ecology.

Principle of Development

The application site lies in the open countryside outside the 'Natural Zone' and comprises an established base for an agricultural business farming a significant area of land (1200 acres), both inside and outside the National Park. Core Strategy policy DS1 states that agricultural development in the open countryside, outside the Natural Zone, is acceptable in principle. Policy L1 requires all development to conserve and where possible enhance the landscape. Saved local plan policy LC13 sets out the detailed locational and design criteria all agricultural developments must meet to be accepted. Consequently the development of further buildings at the site to meet the needs of the business is therefore acceptable in principle by the Core

Strategy subject to compliance with other national and local policy considerations.

As the development comprises 'major development' in a protected landscape, the acceptability of the principle must also include consideration of the tests set out in Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework for such development. The paragraphs below assess the proposal against those tests in terms of the need, the opportunity and potential costs of developing outside the park along with consideration of the developments impact upon the landscape as well as the effectiveness of the mitigation proposed to minimise those impacts.

Agricultural need

The application proposes two new farm buildings at Cliffe House Farm which the applicant is developing as the base for this large farm business because it is centrally located within the wider land holdings of the business and has good access up to the main Kirk Edge Road. This proposal represents the second phase of the applicants planned relocation of the business away family farm from Prospect Farm which is located off Kirk Edge Road just outside the Park some 1.3 km to the NE of the application site. At Prospect Farm the business had access to 5,558 m² of buildings but that site and the buildings on it are now no longer in the ownership of the applicant or available to him following a family dispute. The first phase of the redevelopment of Cliffe House Farm to consolidate the site as the base of the farming operations comprised the existing grain storage and general purpose building built in 2014. This now provides 1963m² of modern working space and replaced the majority of the obsolete farm buildings which needed to be demolished to provide the space for the new building and operational yard area. The current proposal would provide a further 3926m², giving a total of 5889m² and would essentially replace the floor space (5557m²) that was lost to the business at Prospect Farm.

The supporting statement, which has been supplemented by additional information, sets out that the existing building on the site currently has to accommodate all the farm storage needs and therefore has to house straw, grains, machinery, equipment, fertilizers, pesticides and fuel, all of which need to be kept sufficiently separated from each other. The new buildings would provide the necessary space to meet the farms needs and will enable the various products and substances to be stored sufficiently far apart and in separate buildings as appropriate to meet recommended safe storage requirements for these potentially volatile chemicals.

The statement explains the taller building of the two is required to meet the businesses need for different grain storage and conditioning facilities with the height (12.7m to ridge) justified by the need for adequate ventilation and to accommodate the large machinery necessary to move, sort, and store the grain along with grain conditioning facilities, all which need to be housed separately. Furthermore, the agent stresses the need on a farming operation of this scale to realise the economies of scale in terms of locating all grain storage in one site location for logistics of import and export of produce and associated products like the large quantity of straw and the fertiliser necessary on a farm business of this scale. In addition, he makes the point that the specialist handling equipment needs to be readily available in one location.

The other building is required for cattle housing and the additional information submitted by the agent sets out that the scale of the floor space is necessary to accommodate 200 head of cattle. The area is based on the guidelines which require an average of 10m² per head for housing, handling, segregation and isolation which equates to the 1963m² being provided. The height of the cattle shed (10m ridge height) is lower than the adjacent shed and is stated to be necessary to ensure a satisfactory degree of welfare for the cattle in terms of enabling adequate ventilation. In particular the agent points out that a lower height shed would have required a compensatory increase in the floor area to accommodate the livestock use.

In terms of the tests in the NPPF for major development, it is clear that the evidence submitted with the application supports the case that there is an agricultural need for the scale and type of

building development proposed to meet the requirements of this farm business. The Authority has already accepted the principle of major development on this site when it granted consent for the principle and scale of the phase I building approved in 2012 which represented a significant investment of capital by the business on this site. This current application represents phase II of the works and follows the plan to relocate the rest of the business and consolidate all the buildings on one central site for obvious operational and cost reasons.

Currently the business employs three full time persons plus a fluctuating number of seasonal employees, estimated at up to a further 4 at peak periods. The local rural economy is largely based on agriculture and would therefore benefit in terms of this application from the stated creation of a further full time job. Furthermore it is clear that the investment in these new buildings will likely provide greater security for the existing jobs as the business gains a more sustainable footing as it realises the benefits from the economies of scale and from cutting operating costs by operating from a single central site.

There is a general requirement placed on local authorities by government via the NPPF to adopt policies and make decisions that would promote a healthy and prosperous rural economy. Local policies in the Development Plan therefore support the principle of farm building development provided they can be accommodated without harm to the landscape of the park. In this case the justification for major development comes from the local needs of a farm business to develop a viable and sustainable operating base on land which it owns and is which is suitably located in the context of the wider land holdings. The site is a long established farmstead and the business has already invested heavily on the site following the Authority's approval in 2012 for the new building which has already established the principle of both major development in this location as well as the principle of the farms relocation and consolidation on this site. It is clear that the business would incur additional costs in terms of both a continuing financial burden and operational difficulties if it were forced by refusal of this application to develop elsewhere and operate a split operation i.e. outside the Park. Whilst no information has been submitted on the likely costs or implications of such a decision in terms of jobs, future investment and the sustainability of the business, clearly the impacts would be unfavourable and not in the interests of promoting or supporting a prosperous rural economy as required by national policy. For the above reasons, officers consider that the principle of this major development to be acceptable on this site within the Park provided it can be accommodated without harm to the local landscape.

Landscape considerations

The farm is located within the 'Slopes & Valleys with Woodland' area of the 'Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe' in the Authority's Landscape Character Assessment. This area is described as small scale but extensive pastoral landscape which is heavily wooded in places. There is a varied undulating, often steeply sloping topography. Interlocking blocks of ancient semi-natural and secondary woodland are a characteristic feature of this landscape, together with patches of acid grassland and bracken on steeper slopes.

In this case the farm is part of a building group on the edge of a steeply sloping hillside which to the west and south retains its semi-natural scrub woodland where it rises up steeply from the lower slopes which remain as a small scale pastoral landscape. Together with scrub woodland on the slopes, further trees around the site and a stand of larger trees on the south-western edge of the building group provide effective screening and shelter to the building group from the prevailing winds and views from the SW. To the north and east of the site the former small scale pastoral landscape has been changed by the removal of boundary walls/hedges to create larger open fields to facilitate large scale arable farming.

The large modern shed built in 2014 benefits from the existing landform and tree cover around the site to mitigate its impact in key views from the west where although the gable is clearly visible the fact that it is dark coloured and no higher than the trees serves to ensure it is not

intrusive in these views. However, it does remain a clearly visible structure in the wider landscape from a number of other public and private vantage points, particularly from the north and east. In close views from the footpath passing through the site and approaching the site along the footpath from the east it is a dominant feature at present in the absence of any intervening landscaping at present. Whilst the applicant has painted the building to darken its tone and the previously approved landscaping will mitigate the impacts in time, this will take many years to take full effect.

The proposal is to site the new buildings immediately to the north of the existing new agricultural building and access them off the existing track and yard thus meeting the locational requirements of Local Plan policy LC13. This siting also makes best use of the screening effect of the tree cover on the western slopes and the cover provided by the existing building and landform. The revised plans now submitted significantly increase the proposed screening by incorporating an amended landscaping scheme which has been developed with the advice of the Authority's Landscape Architect and the support of the applicant, particularly in respect of incorporating improved landscaping to the east gable of the existing building, which would represent a significant improvement to the planting scheme approved in 2014.

Currently, in views down to the site from Kirk Edge Road to the north a row of *leylandii* trees alongside the existing building provide it with only a partial foil. From this viewpoint the application plans propose the removal of these *leylandii* followed by the very substantial excavation of the rising ground in order to site the two new buildings down into the ground and have the same ground floor level as the existing building. The rising ground around and above the site coupled with the proposed gentle bund and 15m wide shelter belt of trees around the site would ensure that in views from Kirk Edge Road the viewer would be looking down the field and initially see only the ridge lines and part of the upper roof of the new sheds, of which the taller one of the two would be the same as the existing buildings ridge. This remodelled land form would significantly improve the screening of the existing building in these views and in only a few years the wide band of tree and hedge planting would effectively screen both the new buildings and the existing building behind them very effectively and with species that are appropriate to the wider landscape character.

Down the eastern side of the site the depth of the excavation would screen the majority of the new buildings although they would be visible where they are close to the existing building. However, the landscaped bund down this side would provide further screening as it extends down around the site to the south and across the gable end of the existing building to remodel the present steep earth bank with a more natural looking slope. In the amended plans the height of the bund down this side is not shown extending far enough up the site and therefore officers are seeking clarification before the meeting by way of a further amended plan or if necessary by the suggested wording of condition 3 above to secure this detail for the avoidance of any doubt. The proposed 15m wide shelter belt of trees/hedging plants down this bund, with a gap left for a field access track, would in time also grow to effectively foil and then screen the buildings from the east. In views from the footpath to the east the new buildings would be visible only in part and then extending back into the hillside. More importantly in these views, the additional landscaping scheme in front of the existing building would represent a significant improvement to the eventual appearance of that building in the landscape and go some way to mitigating the continuing objections/concerns from local residents about its appearance in the landscape.

In addition to the planting to the north and east sides of the development, the applicant has also agreed to further enhance the tree planting on the bankside across the access road to the west of the proposed buildings. This would take the form of extending the existing planting northward and southwards to give greater depth and continuous tree cover in views from the west. The applicant has also confirmed that the existing stand of mature trees within the SW corner of the site would be protected by repairs to perimeter walling.

The proposed building design is typical of modern agricultural buildings and matches the existing building. The colouring of the sheeting and boarding is considered to be appropriate in the context of the site to give an appropriate dark recessive visual appearance to further mitigate the visual impact of the development.

On balance your officers, supported by the Authority's Landscape Officer, have concluded that the amended plans now demonstrate that the proposed development, although acknowledged to be substantial, can nevertheless be satisfactorily assimilated into the local landscape. Furthermore the amended landscaping scheme would also bring benefits in terms of additional bunding and tree planting to help improve the screening and integration of the 2014 building into the landscape.

Other material considerations:

Access issues

There are no changes to access with the main access continuing to be down from Kirk Edge Road which has already been improved following the last application. There is adequate parking provision on the site within the large working yard area which is set down into the land and therefore screened from views outside the site. Currently the route of the public footpath through the yard is undefined. In response to the concerns of the footpaths officer about potential conflicts between users of the footpath and the inevitable increase in farm traffic, the plans have been amended to incorporate fencing to protect and segregate the route of the right of way where it passes through the yard.

Amenity Issues

The site is already a long established working farmyard and previously had an extensive range of cattle buildings which have been largely replaced by the present building. The application site is physically screened from the houses in the rest of the building group by the existing building and remaining range of older barns which will limit noise and sight of the operations. There will obviously be an increase in farming activity on the site from that which existed more recently which will be noticeable from the houses from time to time, however this needs to be considered in the context of the previous level of farming activity on the site and the fact that it is a long established working farmstead. On this basis, it is considered that the impact upon the neighbouring amenity security or privacy will not be such to warrant any changes to the application or restrictions to the business operation.

Setting of Fair Flatts Farm - Listed Building

Fair Flatts Farm, which has a grade II listed barn in its garden, is situated some distance to the east of the site across a large arable field. Whilst part of the application buildings will be visible initially from the Fair Flatts Farm, it is considered that the two sites are sufficiently far apart to the degree that the new development would not impinge upon the setting of the listed building. Furthermore, the landscaping scheme developed for this current application would, in time, screen the new buildings and significantly improve the visual appearance of the existing buildings in views from Fair Flatts Farm.

Impact upon ecology

Although reference was made in one of the representations about animal burrows potentially being nearby, the site inspection by officers found no signs at or around the application site which currently forms part of a working farmyard and a section of an intensively farmed open arable field immediately next to the buildings. Whilst there may well be ecological interests in the bankside and trees to the west and south-west of the yard, these areas are physically separated

from the working yard area by the existing raised banking running down the west side of the access/yard site. Apart from additional planting there will be no other disturbance to this area as a result of the development. The protection to existing trees and the new planting of native species will improve habitat and accordingly it is considered that there are no ecological issues preventing determination of the application.

Conclusion

The proposed development, although large in scale, is required to meet the agricultural needs of the current farm business operating from the site. Phase I of the applicant's plans to consolidate the farm business at this site have already been implemented with the significant investment in the construction of the existing new building in 2014. Approval for that building in 2012 comprised major development in its own right and established the acceptability in principle of such development on this site within the Park and the planned further replacement of building space lost from Prospect Farm on this site.

The supporting planning statement explains why locating the application buildings on another site outside the park would not be an option for the business because of the increased costs in monetary terms, operational inefficiencies and manpower implications of operating a split site. All of these would be damaging to the long term future viability of the business and would conflict with local and national policy aims to support a prosperous thriving rural economy. In contrast approval would meet those aims and bring those benefits to the wider public interest as well as bringing an additional local employment opportunity. It has therefore been concluded that the applicant has demonstrated an exceptional need for the development to be on this site inside the National Park in accordance with to accord with local and national policy guidance (GSP1 and NPPF paragraphs 115 and 116).

Furthermore, the amended landscaping scheme has demonstrated that the proposed development can be satisfactorily accommodated on this site without harm to the wider landscape as well as bringing some additional enhancement to the setting of the existing building built last year. The proposed new buildings would be sited well into the ground and very well screened by earth bunding and planting such that they would not be prominent from either local vantage points or in the wider landscape.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan in terms of the main issues of need and landscape impact (policies DS1, LC13 and L1). The proposed development would not have any adverse impact upon the ecology of the area, highway safety (policy LT18) or the amenity of the nearby neighbouring property (policy LC4) or the setting of the nearby listed building (policy LC6). In this case relevant policies are in accordance with the more recently published National Planning Policy Framework which allows for agricultural development which conserves the National Park.

Therefore, in the absence of any further material considerations it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly the proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions outlined in this report.

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