

10. FULL APPLICATION – INSTALLATION OF A SHEPHERDS HUT FOR TWO PEOPLE, LOCATED TO THE SIDE OF AN EXISTING SILAGE PIT AT BARKER FIELDS FARM, HORSE LANE, SHELDON. (NP/DDD/0222/0194, SC)

APPLICANT: MR & MRS J FROST

Summary

1. The application seeks planning permission to install a single Shepherds Hut on land close and to the south west of the main farm buildings at Barkers Field Farm, Horse Lane, Sheldon.
2. Policy requires development comprising holiday accommodation through the siting of a single shepherd's hut to support farm diversification and to be located close to the facilities of a farmstead. As the site is part of a working farm, the scheme accords with policy in principle.
3. In addition, due to the siting there would be limited landscape impact, amenity or highway concerns. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval.

Site and Surroundings

4. Barker Fields Farm is located in open countryside approximately 1.4km south of Sheldon and around 1.5km north east of the village of Monyash. Access to the farm is directly of Horse Lane.
5. The nearest property is Red House sited 220m to the east of the main farm.
6. Limestone plateau pastures is the landscape character type. Which comprises of an upland pastoral landscape with a regular pattern of straight roads and small to medium sized rectangular fields bounded by limestone walls. Tree cover is mostly limited to occasional tree groups, or small shelter belts.
7. The landscape surrounding the application site reflects these characteristics and is generally a peaceful rural landscape with open distant views to surrounding higher ground.

Proposal

8. Installation of a single Shepherd Hut to provide tourist accommodation ancillary to Barker Fields Farm.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. **3 year time limit**
2. **Submitted plans & details**
3. **Design & materials**
4. **Holiday occupancy condition**
5. **Retain as single planning unit**
6. **Hut to be sited in approved location only**
7. **Hut must not be replaced by any other structure or caravan**
8. **All new service lines to be underground**
9. **Climate mitigation measures to be implemented**

- 10. Highway matters
- 11. Control over external lighting

Key Issues

- 9. Principle of development, neighbour amenity, landscape and highway impacts.

Relevant history

- 10. 2021 - NP/DDD/0921/0989 – Planning application submitted for installation of a log cabin for two people. Withdrawn prior to determination.

Consultations

- 11. Highway Authority - No objections subject to conditions relating to parking and the use remaining ancillary to the farm.
- 12. Parish Council – Object for the following reasons:
 - 1) *Objections have been made to previous applications for shepherd huts.*
 - 2) *Acceptance of such applications sets a precedent for future similar applications.*
 - 3) *Shepherd huts are not considered to be in keeping with the local area.*
- 13. PDNPA Archaeology – No comment.

Representations

- 14. None.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 15. The Government’s intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent irrelevant policies are out of date.
- 16. In particular Para: 176 states, that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
- 17. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority’s Core Strategy and the new Development Management Policies (DMP). These Development Plan Policies provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park’s statutory purposes for the determination of this application.
- 18. In this case, it is considered there are no significant conflicts between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF.

Main Development Plan Policies

Core Strategy

- 19. GSP1, GSP2 - *Securing National Park Purposes and sustainable development & Enhancing the National Park.* These policies jointly seek to secure national park legal purposes and duties through the conversion and enhancement of the National Park’s landscape and its natural and heritage assets.

20. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles*. Requires that particular attention is paid to the impact on the character and setting of buildings and that the design is in accord with the Authority's Design Guide and development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park.
21. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. States, that recreation and tourism development is acceptable in principle in open countryside.
22. L1 - *Landscape character and valued characteristics*. Seeks to ensure that all development conserves and enhances valued landscape character and sites, features and species of biodiversity importance.
23. RT3 – *Caravans and camping*. States, that small touring camping and caravan sites and backpack camping sites will be permitted, particularly in areas where there are few existing sites, provided that they are well screened, have appropriate access to the road network, and do not adversely affect living conditions.
24. CC1 - *Climate change mitigation and adaptation*. Sets out that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources. Development must also achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions.

Development Management Policies

25. DMC3 - *Siting, Design, layout and landscaping*. Reiterates, that where developments are acceptable in principle, Policy requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The siting, mass, scale, height, design, building materials should all be appropriate to the context. Accessibility of the development should also be a key consideration.
26. DMR1 - *Touring camping and caravan sites*. The development or small extension to an existing caravan site will not be permitted unless its scale, location, access and landscape setting are acceptable. Exceptionally, the development of structures may be permitted where these are small, simple wooden pod structures in woodland locations with minimal landscape impact, or a single Shepherds Hut where this can be located close to the facilities of a farmstead without harm to the natural or historic landscape.
27. *The supporting text to this policy states that “there may be exceptional circumstances where some structures may be acceptable Such solutions can help to support the local economy by extending the tourism season...Traditionally styled shepherd’s hut accommodation can also provide an alternative form of provision with very minimal landscape impact but can only be justified as exceptional if only one hut is installed on any one agricultural holding. Such development should be used to support farm diversification and as such should also be assessed against the requirements of policy DME2.”*
28. DME2 - *Farm Diversification*. States that development will be permitted if there is clear evidence that the new business use will remain ancillary to the agricultural operation of the farm business, meaning that the new business use is a subsidiary or secondary use or operation associated with the agricultural unit.
29. DMR3 - *Holiday occupancy of self-catering accommodation*. States, that where self-catering accommodation is acceptable, its use will be restricted to holiday accommodation for no more than 28 days per calendar year by any one person.

30. DMT3 - *Access and design criteria*. States amongst other things, that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it.

Assessment

Agricultural background

31. According to the submitted details, the farm has been in the family for over 100 years and currently consists of over 83 Hectares (207 acres) of which just over 44 Hectares (110 acres are owned). The primary enterprise is beef production with currently around 480 head of cattle on the holding as a maximum currently including 120 weaned calves and 360 store and finishing cattle ranging from six to 24 months.
32. In this case, the renting of the Shepherds Hut would bring in extra income that would aid further land purchase, whilst helping to secure the farming enterprise into the future.

Principle of the development

33. For the purposes of the Development Plan, the site lies in open countryside.
34. Policy RT3 states amongst other things, that static caravans, chalets or lodges will not be permitted. Whilst not explicitly addressing shepherds huts, they are considered to amount to the permanent siting of a caravan for use as holiday accommodation and therefore amount to a static caravan, albeit generally smaller in size.
35. However, supporting text does state, that exceptionally, static caravans, lodges, or chalets may be acceptable in locations where they are not intrusive in the landscape.
36. Whilst Policy DMR1 goes on to set out, that exceptionally, the development of structures may be permitted where these are small, simple wooden pod structures in woodland locations with minimal landscape impact, or a single Shepherds Hut, where this can be located close to the facilities of a farmstead without harm to the natural or historic landscape.
37. In this case, the development is for a single Shepherds Hut on a working farm that would be sited near to existing farm buildings. Consequently, the hut is accepted in principle in accord with policies DS1, RT3 and DMR1 in these respects.

Siting, Design and materials

38. Policy DMC3 in particular states, that where developments are acceptable in principle, policy requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The siting, mass, scale, height, design, building materials should all be appropriate to the context. Accessibility of the development should also be a key consideration.
39. The Shepherds Hut would be sited on a bed of gravel immediately south of an area of hardstanding, which is at a higher level due to the topography and grading of the land at this point. Access to the site would be from an existing field gate along a grassed track terminating at the hardstanding. Parking would be to the side of the hardstanding area on an existing gravelled area.
40. The hut would measure 5.5m x 2.5m x 3.6m to the highest point of the roof and would accommodate a double bed, kitchenette/living area with separate shower and w/c.

41. The walls of the hut would be timber clad under a corrugated steel roof. The windows and doors would be of timber construction.
42. Regarding this, whilst not reflective of more general local building traditions, the shepherds hut follows a typical design and scale for such structures. Therefore, with conditions relating to a recessive colouring of the hut, it would be acceptable in siting, design and appearance in accordance with policies GSP3 & DMC3 in these regards.

Landscape and visual impact

43. Policy L1 seeks to ensure that all development conserves and enhances valued landscape character and sites.
44. The Shepherds Hut would be sited on land immediately south and at a lower level than an area of existing hardstanding, towards the south western edge of the farm. Due to the position of the hut at this lower level and the distance from the road (Approximately 90m), there would be no close-range public views of the shepherd's hut from the road, other than a potential glimpse of the roof.
45. Whilst the hut would be spaced away from the existing buildings at the site to an extent, it would be viewed in the context of them, and of the existing hardstanding and other farming equipment and storage at the site.
46. In addition, due to its modest scale and proposed recessive colouring, the hut would not appear prominent in the landscape and therefore not detrimental to the visual character of the area. Consequently, the siting of the hut at this edge of farm location satisfies the requirements of Policy L1.

Potential amenity issues

47. The farm is sited in a fairly isolated location with the nearest dwelling (Red House) which is sited around 220m to the east of the main farm complex.
48. In this case, due to this degree of separation, the development would have no adverse impact or significantly harm the amenity of this or another residential property in the locality, therefore the development would accord with policies GSP3 & DMC3 in these respects.

Local Highway matters

49. The local Highway Authority raise no objections, stating that whilst the proposed shepherds hut would increase vehicle movements associated with the existing vehicular access, any minor increase in traffic generation the proposal may generate is unlikely to lead to any severe safety issues associated with the access.
50. In addition, one parking space would be sufficient to serve the proposed shepherd hut. This available space would be to the side of the existing hardstanding on a gravelled area of land.
51. Subject to conditions relating to the parking space being laid out prior to taking the hut into use and that it remains ancillary to the farm, the proposal would be acceptable in highway terms, according with policies DMT3 in these respects.

Environmental Management and sustainability

52. Whilst the energy efficiency standards set out in current building regulations do not apply to these types of structures, the submitted environmental statement says, that the Shepherds Hut would be constructed using sustainably sourced materials and using local labour in its construction. The walls would be insulated, with double glazing to the windows and doors. In addition, low energy lighting and water fittings would be used.
53. Further commenting, that the farm has over the last 10 years worked with an agronomist (Soil Management) helping to reduce the chemical fertilisers used on the farm, planting herbal lays and regularly looking at soil management strategies.
54. Regarding this, and due to the relatively small scale of the development, the information provided would generally meet the requirements of policy CC1 in these respects.

Conclusion

55. In conclusion, the proposed single Shepherd's Hut, would be acceptable in principle, would not be intrusive in the landscape or harmful to neighbour amenity or highway safety. Consequently, the scheme would accord with National and Development Plan Policies in these respects and recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions.

Human Rights

56. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.
57. List of Background Papers (not previously published)
58. Nil
59. Report Author: Steve Coombes, South Area Planning Team.