

**9. FULL APPLICATION – PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO HOUSE LIVESTOCK AND ISOLATION UNIT ON LAND NORTH OF LITTON DALE ROAD, LITTON DALE. (NP/DDD/1222/1583, SC)**

**APPLICANT: MR R BAKER**

**Summary:**

1. The application seeks permission for the erection of a modern agricultural building and associated hardstanding in an isolated location away from the main farmstead.
2. The key consideration is the potential impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.
3. It is considered that the building would have a harmful visual impact on the valued characteristics and appearance of the locality and the wider open landscape setting of the National Park. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

**Site and Surroundings**

4. The application site is the south-east corner of a strip field off the north side of the Litton Dale road, approximately 160m east of the junction with the B6049.
5. The strip field is some 300m north of the main farm group which is positioned at a higher level on the limestone plateau above the east side of Tideswell Dale, bordering the Wye Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest and Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation to the west.
6. The applicant farms 95 acres, from the farm base which includes the yard and range of existing portal frame buildings on the opposite side of Litton Dale. Stock levels are approximately 150 sheep plus their followers, a herd of 30 suckler cows and their followers, and 60 young stock being finished.
7. The nearest neighbouring property is Dale View, just over 100m to the west.

**Proposal**

8. The erection of a mono-pitched roof agricultural building to house livestock and store fodder and serve as an isolation unit if required.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:**

9. **The building and associated hardstanding, by virtue of their isolated siting and appearance, would have a significant and adverse visual impact harming the valued characteristics and appearance of the landscape and the wider scenic beauty of the National Park.**

**The proposal is therefore contrary to the landscape conservation objectives set out in the NPPF and the Authority's Development Plan Policies: Core Strategy GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1 & L1 and Development Management Policies DMC3 & DME1.**

### **Key Issues**

10. Principle of development.
11. Potential impact on the character and appearance of the area.
12. Potential impact on residential amenity and highway.

### **Relevant history**

13. None, however, there is an extensive history of applications for agricultural development at the applicant's farmstead.

### **Consultations**

14. Highway Authority - No objections.
15. Parish Council - No objections, support the application for the requirements of the applicant.

### **Representations**

16. None received.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

17. 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 or relevant policies are out of date.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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**

#### **Relevant Core Strategy (CS) policies:**

21. 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.
22. 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.

23. DS1 - *Development Strategy & L1 - Landscape character and valued characteristics*, both support agricultural development in the open countryside, provided that development respects, conserves and enhances the valued characteristics of the site, paying particular attention to impact upon the character and setting of buildings and siting, landscaping and building materials.
24. CC1 - *Climate change mitigation and adaption*. 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.

#### Relevant Development Management (DM) 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. DME1 - *Agricultural or forestry operational development*. Allows for new agricultural buildings provided that they are functionally required, are close to the main group of buildings wherever possible and in all cases relates well to existing buildings and landscape features, respects the design of existing buildings and building traditions, makes use of the least obtrusive location and does not require obtrusive access tracks, roads or services.
27. 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.

#### Supplementary Guidance

28. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is provided in the adopted guidance note '*Agricultural Developments in the Peak District National Park*'. Whilst the Authority's Landscape Strategy and Action Plan offers guidance on the application of landscape conservation policies in the Development Plan.

#### Assessment

##### Principle of the development

29. From the outcome of a site visit and the details submitted in the supporting documents, it is apparent that the land is in use for the purposes of agriculture.
30. In this case, should the siting of the proposed agricultural building have been acceptable, it would be considered reasonably necessary for the purposes of an agricultural operation and proportionate to the needs of the applicants current farming practice, in accord with policy DME1 in those particular respects.

##### Proposed use of building

31. According to the agent the parcel of land subject of this application is a relatively new addition to the applicant's main farm holding, which is sited on the opposite side of the road and at a higher level with the main farm building group some 300m to the south. The building would be sited where currently there are the remnants of a previous structure that has long since fallen into disrepair and of which little remains. As a result, rather than being a replacement for whatever sat on the site it would clearly constitute the

erection of an isolated modern building in the open countryside .

32. The applicant states the building is required as additional shelter and feeding of current stocks and occasionally as an 'isolation unit' for any incoming cattle to be quarantined prior to joining the main herd.
33. Furthermore, the applicant states that a building in this location would enable any vet visits to be carried out more easily, especially when having to deal with injured or ill livestock.
34. Officers have no doubts that the building would be put to agricultural use however the key issue is the remote siting of the building away from the main farmstead and the resultant harmful visual impact upon this open undeveloped landscape setting and whether there are any over-riding material considerations that would outweigh the strong landscape objection and policy objection in DME1 to an isolated building well divorced from the main farmstead.

#### Siting, design and materials

35. As set out above, in terms of siting, policy DME1 states amongst other things, that new farm buildings should be close to the main group of buildings wherever possible and in all cases relate well to and make best use of existing building, trees, walls and other landscape features.
36. The proposed building would be located to the east of the field access to the parcel of land close to the highway and would sit primarily on an area of hardstanding that according to the agent had previously been used for agricultural uses. Access would be through an existing field gate directly off Litton Dale Road.
37. The building would measure approximately 12.1m in length x 6m in width x 2.7m to lower eaves level. The roof would incorporate a factory coated coloured fibre cement sheeted roof, coloured Slate Blue and GRP rooflights, with Yorkshire boarding to the elevations. Below cladding on the north gable elevation and on the internal gable would be pre-stressed bare concrete panels.
38. The design and use of materials of the structure represents that of a modern agricultural building. Whilst the roof form does not reflect the local building tradition for dual pitched roofs it could be amended easily, as could the bare 'white' concrete panels which would otherwise be visually intrusive and harmful to the local landscape. Subject to such improvements to the detailed design and colouring of the building the general form and appearance of the building is not in itself an issue, however this does not outweigh the overriding harmful impact of the siting in this open countryside location, therefore contrary to policies DMC3 & DME1, respectively.

#### Potential landscape impact of the development

39. Policy does support agricultural development in the open countryside, provided that development conserves and enhances the valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan, and other valued characteristics, such as the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape.
40. In this case, it is considered the development, by virtue of its isolated siting, would have a harmful impact on the valued character and amenity of the surrounding open and undeveloped landscape, that would only be partially mitigated for by the presence of the few existing trees and the drystone walling along the roadside boundary.

41. With regard to landscaping. A scheme has been submitted with the application, however, it is considered that this modest additional tree or shrub planting would not alleviate the landscape impact concerns particularly in the short to medium terms, and indeed should it be considered would take a number of years before it was properly established. Even when any such planting was established the building would remain clearly visible in the street scene as an isolated building in the open countryside.
42. In landscape terms therefore, the new building and associated hardstanding would in this open setting appear unacceptable in its visual intrusion, having a significant and harmful impact on the locality and the wider landscape setting of the National Park.
43. Consequently, the scheme is considered unacceptable in landscape terms, contrary to Policies DS1, LC1 & DMC3, which seek to safeguard landscape character and the valued characteristic of the area.

#### Potential amenity impacts

44. The nearest property potentially affected by the development, would be Dale View sited around 100m to the west of the development site.
45. Due to the distance of separation, it is considered the development would have no adverse impact on the amenity of this property or any other dwellings in the locality. Consequently, the proposal would accord with policies GSP3 & DMC3 in this respect.

#### Potential Highway matters

46. The Local Highway Authority have no objections on the basis the building is used for agricultural purposes only, in support of existing farming activities carried out on the applicants surrounding and controlled farmland.
47. In this case, with the use being for agricultural purposes only, it is considered the proposal would be acceptable in highway term and generally meets the criteria set out in Policy DMT3 in this regard.

#### Environmental Management & sustainability

48. In itself, it would be a modest construction without the need for heating or mains electricity lighting.
49. In addition, the building would incorporate sustainably sourced timber that is compliant with CE Standards set out by Government.
50. Rainwater would be collected in rainwater harvesting tanks and used as drinking water for the livestock and to wash down any machinery used on this parcel of land when being used as an isolation unit, so as not to contaminate the main farm holding.
51. Accordingly, it is considered the development would essentially follow the principles of Policy CC1 in this regard.

#### Conclusion

52. Whilst it is acknowledged there would be benefits to the applicant's current and future business intentions from any approval granted for the scheme, many of the benefits could be achieved by siting the building at the main farmstead without the landscape harm identified. Therefore, it is concluded in the planning balance that the needs expressed do not outweigh the significant overall harm which would result from the provision of the

overall development in this isolated rural location, which would not relate to any other buildings and only minimal landscape features surrounding.

53. Consequently, the scheme is recommended to members for refusal.

### **Human Rights**

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

55. List of Background Papers (not previously published)

56. Nil

57. Report Author: Steve Coombes, South Area Planner.