

8. FULL APPLICATION - FOR THE ERECTION OF FARM BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED EXCAVATION WORK, INCLUDING THE DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING FARM BUILDING, AT KNOWLE HOUSE FARM, REAPSMOOR (NP/SM/0823/0951, DH)

APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Summary

1. The application is for the erection of two farm buildings and associated excavation work, including the demolition of an existing modern farm building at the Knowle House Farm, Reapsmoor. The site is a tenanted farm owned by the National Park Authority.
2. The scale of the proposed development is commensurate with the scale of the agricultural holding with a design typical of modern agricultural buildings.
3. The existing use and character of the site is not altered, and the harm to the wider landscape setting of the farmstead is low.
4. The application is recommended for approval.

Site and Surroundings

5. The application site is located in open countryside at Reapsmoor, approximately 3.3km south of Longnor and 3km north of Warslow.
6. The property is not listed, nor are there any listed buildings in the vicinity. Neither does it lie within a designated conservation area.
7. The site comprises a land holding of 58 hectares, with the farmstead comprising a hard-surfaced yard with the farmhouse and traditional stone buildings to the northern side, behind which is a slurry storage tank, and a linear range of larger relatively modern portal frame buildings to the southern side.
8. The site is open to public views from nearby public footpaths, 195m to the east, 70m to the north and south, and one to the immediate west side of the farmstead.
9. The nearest neighbouring properties are Larch House, approximately 147m to the north, and Moorside Farm 153m to the north-west.

Proposal

10. The proposal is for the erection of farm buildings and associated excavation work, including the demolition of an existing farm building. The existing slurry store is also to be removed from the site.

RECOMMENDATION:

11. That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:
 - **Statutory time limit**
 - **The development to be in accordance with the submitted plans drawing numbers 100-02 (proposed site plan) and 100-03 (proposed plans and elevations) received 11/08/2023**
 - **Removal when no longer required for the purposes of agriculture**

Key Issues

12. The key issues are:

- Whether the proposals would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the site and its setting, or the wider landscape setting within which it sits; and
- Whether the proposals would harm the amenities of nearby neighbouring properties.

History

13. 1989 - Planning permission for an above ground slurry store and hardstanding was granted subject to conditions under NP/SM/0289/0016.
14. 1994 - The provision of a roof over the feeding area was granted by NP/SM/0994/0109.
15. 2002 - The reception of a replacement cattle building and hardstanding was granted under NP/SM/0702/0043.
16. 2010 - An extension to an existing livestock building was granted by NP/SM/1109/1015
17. 2013 - Extension to an existing livestock building was granted by NP/SM/0613/0535
18. 2019 - Prior Notification for an alteration to an existing stone barn, NP/GDO/0519/0447, was accepted

Consultations

19. Staffordshire County Council (Highway Authority) – No objection.
20. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – No response to date.
21. Fawfieldhead Parish Council – No objections.
22. PDNPA Archaeology - No archaeological concerns.

Representations

23. During the publicity period the Authority has not received any formal representations regarding the proposal.

Main Policies

24. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, CC1, DS1 & L1
25. Relevant Local Plan policies: DMC3 & DME1
26. National Planning Policy Framework

Wider Policy Context

27. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:
 - Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage

- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public
- When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to:
- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks.

National Planning Policy Framework

28. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. A revised NPPF was published in July 2021. 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. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and policies in the Peak District National Park Development Management Policies document 2019. 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.
29. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF 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. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.'*
30. The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas.

Peak District National Park Core Strategy

31. GSP1 & GSP2 - *Securing National Park Purposes and sustainable development & Enhancing the National Park.* These policies set out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives, and 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
32. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles.* GSP3 states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
33. CC1 – *Climate change mitigation and adaptation.* CC1 requires all development to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources to achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions.
34. DS1 - *Development Strategy.* This sets out what forms of development are acceptable in principle within the National Park.
35. L1 - *Landscape character and valued characteristics.* L1 states that all development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.

Local Plan Development Management Policies

36. DMC3 - *Siting, design, layout and landscaping*. DMC3 states that where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is 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.
37. DME1 – *Agricultural and forestry operational development* – Policy DME1 states that new agricultural buildings will be permitted provided that the scale proposed is functionally required for the purpose intended. It goes on to state that new agricultural buildings shall (i) be located close to the farmstead or main group of buildings and relate well to existing buildings, trees, walls and other landscape features (ii) not be in isolated locations requiring obtrusive access tracks or services (iii) respect the design, scale, mass and colouring of existing buildings (iv) avoid adverse effects on the areas valued characteristics, and (v) avoid harm to the setting, fabric and integrity of the Natural Zone.

Assessment

Principle of the development

38. Core Strategy policy DS1 states that development for agriculture in the countryside outside the Natural Zone will be acceptable in principle.
39. The agricultural holding was formerly a dairy farm, but more recently has been a beef business with a herd of suckler cows and their followers being sold on as store cattle. In light of the change of farming practices the existing slurry store to the north of the yard area is to be removed, and the smaller, westernmost, of the two existing buildings is to be demolished, opening up the yard area.
40. The rationale for the new buildings is that the land holding is too small to be viable as a dairy farm, therefore the milking parlour (which is nearing the end of its life) and slurry tank are no longer required. Their removal and replacement with the proposed buildings, which are a commensurate scale for the holding and fit for modern farming practice, make the farmstead a more viable proposition for any incoming tenant. It is accepted that this represents a functional need for the development.

Visual Impacts

41. The siting for the proposed buildings is to the south of the existing yard entrance, which is unaltered by the proposal. The proposed buildings would form an inverted 'L' around the south-west corner of the yard.
42. The south side of the yard is cut into the rising land and it is proposed to excavate a little further than as existing to accommodate the proposed development whilst leaving room for manoeuvring round the buildings.
43. The larger and longer element is a replacement cattle building, and it incorporates room for the storage of bedding straw in addition to livestock housing. It measures 30.6m by 10.7m, providing an area of 327 square metres. The smaller element is at right angles to the longer building, and encompasses the site of the existing open manure store. It would measure 13.7m by 12.2m, an area of just over 167 square metres, to provide a covered manure store and machine store.

44. The buildings are functional and typical of modern agricultural development. The arrangement, forming an inverted 'L' creating the corner of the yard, also reduces the overall mass of the buildings, thereby reducing the visual impact. The Yorkshire boarding and fibre cement roofing sheets are standard for this type of development and the boarding will weather to a recessive colour.
45. Although the design and materials of the proposed buildings do not reflect or harmonise with the natural environment or local building traditions, the development is typical of modern farm buildings, and accords with adopted design guidance for this type of development.
46. In terms of the wider visual impact the development, due to the topography of the area the yard is cut into the slope of the rising land to the south of the farmstead, and the buildings would be backed by this rising ground, which reduces the landscape impact. Roadside planting also breaks up the visibility of the site. Where visible, the development would be seen in the context of the existing farm group.
47. The proposals are therefore considered to have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the existing site and a negligible impact on the wider landscape setting of the farmstead.
48. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposal is compliant with Core Strategy policies GSP3, L1, and Development Management policies DMC3 and DME1.

Amenity Impacts

49. Due to the location of the site in relation to neighbouring properties, it will have will not have an adverse effect upon any neighbouring properties.
50. As noted above, the proposal will not have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the site, or its wider setting.
51. In terms of amenity issues the proposal is in line with the Authority's policies and national planning policy.

Sustainability

52. A statement was provided with the application. The provision of a covered manure store will assist in preventing foul water run-off from the site. It is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of CC1.

Conclusion

53. The size and scale of the proposed development is modest and appropriate for the stated needs of the agricultural business.
54. In terms of design, scale, massing and materials the proposal is typical of modern agricultural buildings, and in line with the Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance.
55. As such, it is concluded that the proposal is compliant with policies GSP1, 2 & 3, DS1, L1, DMC3, DME1, and national planning policy.

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

Report Author and Job Title

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