

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0597
Valid 07/12/2023

LAND AT HOLLY DALE
FARM DOUSE LANE
BRADNOP

ERECTION OF A PORTAL
FRAMED AGRICULTURAL
BUILDING TO HOUSE YOUNG
CATTLE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle
- Impact on character of the area
- The farmer's need and benefit to the rural economy
- Highways
- Neighbour amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site relates to agricultural land located within Bradnop. The site forms part of a 90 acres holding. The land was previously associated with a farmstead at Holly Dale. These buildings are now residential.

The holding lies to the north west of an unclassified road, Douse Lane. The applicant farms this land at Holly Dale in association with their agricultural holding at Longshaw. The development will be served by an existing access off Douse Lane.

PROPOSAL

Consent is sought for the erection of an agricultural building to house young cattle. The building will have a pitch roof and will be constructed with a mixture of natural Yorkshire boarding with concrete panels between. The roof will be dark blue profiled sheeting with in line roof lights. The overall size is 30m by 15m, and would be built to an eaves height of 4.1m and ridge height of 6.7m at the lowest ground level and 5.6m at the highest ground level.. The applicant explains that he has a well established dairy enterprise with a herd of 430 milking cows, 09 calf heifers, 20 rearing and 80 weanlings that run between the linked holdings of Longshaw Farm and Holly Dale Farm.

He describes how his business has suffered from a number of Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) break downs in the herd over the last few years, and as a result has spent a majority of time subject to the associated movement restrictions on the stock produced on the farm, which can only be sold to a limited number of approved buyers, or direct to slaughter. The requirements of an isolation unit are strictly controlled by DEFRA and it would enable the farm business to retain the calves and

rear them so they can ideally be sold at full market value when they have achieved TB free status, which is when they have had two clear tests.

In addition, it is explained that the need for a stock building on land separate from the main holding is justified because there is not enough grazing land at Longshaw.

Longshaw is separated from Holly Dale by a main road and so all stock moving between the two has to be moved by trailer. They can't just be let out into an adjacent land parcel. The holdings are held under different CPH designations and so can be treated as being quite separate from each other for not only tb testing regime reasons but so that stock can readily access land adjacent land and so that the building can be similarly accessed by grazing stock on the adjacent land. This being necessary for not only tb testing but for routine veterinary procedures.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan

SS1 Development Principles
DC1 Design Considerations
DC 3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 6,12,15

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2023/0261 - erection of a portal framed agricultural building to house young cattle – refused

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 08.01.2024
Neighbour consultation period ends:08.01.2024
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

One comment making the following point:

- There has been No site notices up

- I do not object in principle to the erection of a building to house calves on the land holding but I do object to its proposed location next to my stables for the following reasons:
 - Noise and lights from the proposed building would disturb the horses in my stables. Horses are easily disturbed and such upset can lead to medical issues such as colic.
 - I have owned the stables and land for 24 years and often have to walk to access the stables in bad weather.
 - Having frozen water for days and the road impassable for this time also, this would not be an option surely with a shed full of young calves.
 - An application nearby for a agricultural building was refused because the site was to remote and no one been able to hear see or tend to the large numbers of livestock housed, this site at Bottomhouse is on a much more passable highway than Douse Lane.
 - The planning statement suggests that there will be more than just this building required as it states the location is selected for the following reason" to accommodate a building of the size to meet the required need with scope for future expansion should further need arise" surely this would be more appropriately housed at the existing farmstead where a slurry tank and redundant farm building was removed?.
 - The building would be large and would be very dominant on the road frontage and visible over a wide area.
 - The present hedge would not provide much of a screen.
 - The development would be visible to neighbouring houses and my site which would be effected by noise, flies, and smells from the building as well as an increase in farm machinery traffic . The application planning statement indicates that there are other suitable locations for the building on the site. I am sure these would be more in keeping and keep the holding altogether rather than splitting to creating a new development in a sensitive area. And also
 - Holly dale farm had a track installed for agricultural traffic which would also serve as a safer option than coming round the narrow blind bend on douse Lane which is between the proposed site and Holly dale farm, with heavy machinery.
 - The retrospective application for the agricultural track stated "Modern farm buildings, which were redundant, have been demolished." would there previous locations not be a more suitable location.
 - Prior notification approval for the conversion of buildings to three houses was given in 2017 at Holly Dale Farm. This permission involved the demolition of farm buildings and the stopping of using one of the livestock buildings remaining in the land. This building is in effect replacing these buildings on the same holding, I understood this couldn't take place for at least 10 years under class Q

Town / Parish Comments

No comments received

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection subject to condition.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS 10 states that the other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages. Policy SS10 sets out that development will only be permitted where it has an essential need to be located and supports rural diversification and the sustainability of rural areas. Development should enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by requiring development to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the landscape.

The application site is located within the open countryside and relates to the erection of an agricultural building. The principle of the erection of an agricultural building in this location is acceptable subject to other material considerations.

Design and Impact on Character and appearance of area.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy DC3 requires the Council to protect, and where possible enhance local landscape. This will be achieved by resisting development which would lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside. The site lies within the gritstone highland fringe landscape character area which is noted for its high sensitivity to change.

The application site is located within the open countryside but does not fall within any special landscape area or area of designated interest. The site is currently used as an ad hoc uncovered muck store and therefore does not have an ecological value or contribute to the visual amenity of the countryside.

Inevitably many of the structures and buildings that farming enterprises rely upon are of functional or utilitarian appearance and size. While there are certain ways of siting, grouping and designing this type of development to minimise its impact, sometimes the needs of an enterprise will mean that development must be absorbed by their surroundings. Consequently, it is common within a rural farming area for sheds, to be apparent and have some presence within the landscape.

The proposed building is to be located close to but set back from Douse Lane and the access into the site is from an existing access. The buildings at the stables are relatively low level structures and are relatively well screened from Douse Lane due to an existing hedgerow that continues for a significant distance along Douse Lane however it is clear that the land is agricultural in character.

By contrast, within this context the building and particular would appear from certain locations along the roadside, and would be viewed as a visually prominent building due to the proposed size and height. When compared with the adjacent stable buildings the proposed building would be significantly greater in scale and as a result have a greater impact on the landscape.

The agent has sought to overcome this concern by introducing a soft landscaping scheme which includes planting a number of trees. These trees are proposed as being locally sourced native tree species 1.5m minimum height planted 2m apart. Hawthorn would be planted to infill the existing boundary hedge. These planting would provide some planting however due to the 6.7m high ridge and 4m high eaves the planting would not effectively screen the building as not to be visually harmful and prominent to the landscape. Any significant planting that could effectively screen the building would look unnatural in the landscape as the hedge planting in the area is sparse and sporadic along the entrance to the site and along Douse Lane there are sections with no hedge planting.

For this reason, the proposed development is considered to result in the erection of A large and visually prominent addition that would be considered harmful to the visual amenity of the area and wider landscape. It was requested for the building of this size to the located close to the main farm holding however the applicants has stated that this is not possible due need to quarantine animals and the reasons described further within the report. However, whilst this may well be the case, equally the use of the building by young stock would appear to be remote from the farm, which is an unusual situation given that most farmers wish to have buildings housing young stock close to where they can be supervised.

The farmer's need and benefit to the rural economy

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

There has been careful consideration of the farmer's need and whether there was any alternative location for the building, preferably new buildings that are located within an existing grouping can have less of a visual impact such as at the main holding Longshaw Farm. The applicant has clarified that the fact that the building would be used as an isolation unit and by its very nature it must be located away from existing farm buildings and infrastructure so that calves can be reared in a closed unit away from potential contamination.

The applicant explains (as set out in the application details above) how his large and well established enterprise is affected by TB and incurs financial loss and how the new unit would minimise costs and risks while introducing a new revenue stream

allowing his enterprise to adapt and maximise profit relative to investment. Of course with successful robust farming enterprise there comes some wider benefit to the rural economy while, overall, preserving and protecting open countryside as a resource.

The LPA have considered the details submitted by the applicant very carefully and have no concerns with the need for the building or the need for it to be separate from the main holding. However as previously discussed the proposed development would be sited in a prominent location and the building is of a significant size and height and it not considered that the location proposed is suitable for a building of this size. Even with the existing and proposed hedgerows along the boundary, when not in leaf, the building because of its elevated position in the landscape would visually apparent and prominent on the approach from the west. Overall it is considered that the development would not respond to the character of the landscape and would harm its visual character.

Amenity

The nearest residential dwelling would be the dwellings at Holly Dale almost 200m from the proposed building. The proposed building would therefore have no undue impact upon residential amenity in this area.

The adjacent landowner has commented on the proposal with concerns regarding the noise/lights disturbing horses and that the building would be large and very dominant. They also state that the building would harm neighbour amenity in relation to noise, flies and smells and an increase in farm machinery. These comments have been taken into consideration when reviewing the proposal and is considered that the distance to neighbouring dwellings is sufficient to ensure that they are not harmed unduly. With respect to the relationship to the neighbouring stables, whilst noise from farm animals may be apparent it is unclear how this would affect any horses. Animals could graze the land at the present time and any disturbance could occur. It is not considered that any impact on the stables would be sufficient to warrant a refusal of this application.

Highway Safety

The proposed development would utilise an existing access off Douse Lane. The highway authority consider that the development would not cause a significance increase in trip generation and therefore have no objection to the development subject to a condition requiring that the access be resurfaced as the carriage way edge is breaking up.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The impact of the proposed development is considered to result in significant harm to the character of the area and wider landscape, and this harm on balance, is not

considered to be outweighed by the specific needs of the farmer and the benefit to the rural economy.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : That planning consent be refused.

Case Officer: Rebecca Bowers

Recommendation Date: 09.02.2024

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On Behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council