

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Case Officer: Mrs Nicola Glanville

Ward: South Tawton

Application No: 00633/2015

Agent/Applicant:
Robert H Hicks & Co
Miss C McIntosh
West Hele
Buckland Brewer
Bideford
Devon
EX39 5LX

Applicant:
Mr Lightfoot
Allison Farm
Spreyton
Credton
Devon
EX17 5AY

Site Address: Allison Farm, Spreyton, Credton, Devon, EX17 5AY

Development: Retrospective application for the erection of an agricultural building.



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Reason item is being put before Committee

Cllr Cann is supporting the Parish decision not to support this application

Recommendation:

Conditional approval

Conditions

Accord with plans
Implementation and timing of landscaping proposal

Agricultural use – removal if uses ceases

Yorkshire boarding to be painted within 30 days of date of Grant of Approval.

Roof cladding to be dark grey

Key issues for consideration:

- Visual impact
- Neighbour impact
- Highways

Consultations:

Highways - No comment

Parish Council - No support – size, height, location and isolation has a detrimental impact on the appearance of the open countryside.

Drainage Engineer – No objections.

Landscape Officer – Comments unavailable at the time of writing this report and will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

Site Description:

The site lies in the countryside, accessed to the south off Two Post Lane which is to the west of the A3124 to the North West of the village of Spreyton, within the Parish of South Tawton.

The area is agricultural in character, with a sparse scattering of residential properties and farms. The nearest of which is Endridge, 421m away on the A3124 and Longdown Farm, approximately 465m metres to the north of the site.

Allison Farm is situated 710m to the east of the site and is separated from this block of land by the A3124.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks the retention of a general purpose agricultural building which has been erected for livestock use. The barn measures approximately 5.7m in height with a width of 27.4m and a depth of 13.7m.

The proposal also seeks the retention of a yard area created in advance of the building, along with the removal of an existing hedgebank adjacent to the highway, which was reinstated to the west and south of the site to form a natural boundary around the yard.

The LPA have negotiated a landscaping scheme that incorporates the reinstatement of the hedgebank adjacent to the highway, allowing for a field access. Additional infill natural hedge planting is proposed to the new hedgebanks to the west and south of the yard area, in addition to a shelter belt of trees to the south to provide additional screening of the building.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development/Sustainability

Policy SP1 of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) seeks to strictly control development in the countryside and Policy ED18 of the Local Plan reinforces this by setting out parameters within which development in the countryside will be permitted. Development must require a countryside location and support

the essential needs of agriculture or forestry interests or meet the essential, small scale and exceptional local needs of a settlement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to permit sustainable development and seeks a balance between economic, social and environmental interests. It seeks to support a prosperous rural economy by supporting economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development; support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas; and promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.

Therefore, contained within the local policies and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption to only allow sustainable development in the countryside and only where there is an agricultural, economic or rural diversification justification for it.

Agricultural Justification

Allison Farm comprises 97.84 hectares (24.76 acres) or thereabouts of mixed pasture and arable land. The land is utilised by a breeding flock of 400 ewes together with 25 horses comprising brood mares and young stock. The applicant also rears beef cattle.

The block of land to be serviced by this building was purchased by the applicant in late 2013 and extends to 40.59 hectares (100 acres). This block of land is separated from Allison Farm by the A3124 which runs between North Tawton and Whiddon Down.

When the applicant purchased this block of land it was mainly arable land and therefore a building to store the grain and straw was necessary. The applicant mainly rears beef cattle as well as running his breeding ewe flock and breeds quality race horses. With this in mind, he has returned this land to pasture this year and therefore a building on this land is now imperative in order to provide accommodation and handling facilities for this stock. It is not practical to run stock across the A3124 back to the main farm buildings at Allison Farm.

Design/Landscape

The development falls within countryside characterised by an agricultural landscape. There is a strong feeling of remoteness, as the area is sparsely dotted with buildings. The nearest of which is Endridge, 421m away on the A3124 and Longdown Farm approximately 465m to the north of the site.

If it is deemed that there is sufficient agricultural justification for the buildings, it is not considered that the development will significantly alter this character.

The building has been positioned to provide access off a non-classified country lane as opposed to the main A3124. The removed roadside hedge has been relocated around the west and south boundary of the yard to create a hard standing yard and the building has then been erected within this, adjacent to the highway.

Although at the top of the field and the hill on which it stands, there are very few locations in which the development can be seen; one viewpoint is situated at the access point to the site and the other is from the entrance to Longdown Farm some 465m away. From this position the building can just be seen but the proposed reinstated hedgerow will shield the building in time and as the ridge height does not protrude from the height of the adjacent hedging, it does not cause a visual impact on the surroundings.

Prior to the establishment of the reinstated hedgerow on the roadside (lane) boundary, the authority would condition the Yorkshire boarding of the building to be painted dark green and be maintained and retained as such.

The building is well concealed to the north by existing hedge banks, and the repositioned hedgerow to the west provides good screening, which will be much improved once the proposed infill planting to bolster it has been carried out. The building is concealed to the east by the topography of the land.

Although normally the clustering of buildings on an agricultural holding would be encouraged and isolated buildings would not be supported, given the limited scale of the building at the site and the landscaping that is proposed to reinforce the enclosure created by the planted hedging, the reinstatement of the highway boundary and additional shelter belt planting yet to be done, it is difficult to argue that there would be significant harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the landscape.

Neighbour Amenity:

The neighbours would be little affected in terms of visual amenity from the building at the site, due to their separation distances and the existing and proposed planting. The agricultural use of the buildings would also have little impact on the nearby dwellings, which are set within a rural area where it is reasonable to experience the low level disturbance from the movement of agricultural vehicles or stock.

Therefore, the development subject to this application is not considered to cause any material harm to neighbouring properties.

Highways/Access:

The Highway Authority has made no objections to the proposal based on its agricultural use. However, should the site/buildings be used for non-agricultural purposes or not be required to support agricultural activity, an objection to the development would be raised on the unsustainable location, which is remote from services and facilities of a settlement and from available public transport links.

Conclusion

The application, which seeks planning permission retrospectively for a traditional farm building and creation of a farm yard area, that are considered reasonably required in connection with the agricultural uses of the site, would not result in harm to the rural character and appearance of the site and surroundings or the quality of the landscape and would not result in any harm to neighbours. There are no technical objections to the development and, as such, the application is recommended for approval.

This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For **decision-taking** this means

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and

- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

West Devon Borough Council Core Strategy 2011

SP1 – Sustainable Development

SP17 – Landscape Character

SP19 – Biodiversity

SP20 – Promoting High Quality Design

West Devon Borough Council Local Plan Review 2005(as amended 2011)

NE10 – Protection of the Countryside and Other Open Spaces

ED18 – New Farm Buildings in the Countryside

ED19 – Agricultural Related Activities

Considerations under Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.
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