Equestrian Design

PLANNING APPLICATION

HPK/2013/0232

For the erection of a replacement barn for the storage of implements and equipment and the housing of animals, to Ellibancke Farm, Redmoor Lane, New Mills, Derbyshire.

FURTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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Since making the above application discussions with the planning officer (Karen Taylor) have resulted in the request for additional supporting information to justify the building and in particular the design and scale of the building.

Rationale for the submitted design

It is clear from the information submitted and also from visual information when carrying out a site visit that works have progressed well with the general improvement of the smallholding (as noted in the design and access statement that has already been submitted as part of this proposal), and it is evident that all the land the provision of the new building that is the subject of this application, the smallholding is almost ready for agricultural use and occupation by agricultural animals.

It has already been accepted that the existing building had previously been for agricultural use and that the new one is also to be for agricultural use (this is detailed in paragraph 6 of the planning appeal decision letter and subsequently summarised on page 1 of the design and access statement that has already been submitted as part of this proposal). As has already been agreed and pointed out by the Planning Inspectorate this can be adequately controlled by planning condition.

Careful consideration has also been given to the design and materials proposed for the replacement building. In paragraph 10 of the appeal decision, the planning inspector agreed with High Peak Borough Council, that the materials would be acceptable. However during pre-application discussions with Mike Green it was agreed that the materials be varied slightly, to include a low concrete block wall, (450mm high), the use of 'hit and miss' vertical boarding to the remainder of the walls with 4 No 3m wide, hinged timber doors and corrugated roof sheeting incorporating opaque roof lights to the roof. (The 'hit and miss' boarding was considered a necessity from the LPA's point of view for ventilation). These previously agreed design features have been incorporated into the proposed building.

It is evident that the existing building incorporates the use of a mono pitch roof, with a maximum height of 3m, it is also evident that the existing building is perhaps best politely described as being 'of an age' and it is certainly not a design of agricultural building that is either common in the area, nor common in an agricultural environment. In fact when compared to the design of other agricultural buildings in the area, it is considered to be more of an alien feature in the traditional agricultural landscape - particularly with it's almost flat roof.

It is worth noting that the building previously agreed as acceptable with Mike Green (shown on drawing number 241012), had a maximum height of 3.9m, with an element of that building being reduced in height slightly at one end. The new building

under this proposal has a maximum ridge height of 4m - being 2.9m to the eaves, which although slightly higher than the highest part of that previously agreed as acceptable, the building is approximately 2.5m shorter to the elevation facing Redmoor Lane. When compared with the design of the building shown on drawing number 241012, this reduction in the overall length of the building significantly reduces the visual impact of the proposed building when viewed from its main viewing point of Redmoor Lane.

Following careful consideration of the appeal decision, the applicant has significantly reduced the footprint of the replacement building from the previous 120m2 to 81.3m² (this is just over 6% larger than the existing building footprint and therefore it is not significantly larger). It is worth noting at this point that the design of the building shown on drawing number 241012, had a footprint of 109.2m2 - approximately 34.5% larger than this current proposal.

It is also worth noting that the volume of the building shown with this proposal amounts to 280.49m3, which is 13.22m3 less than the 293.70m3 of the building shown on drawing number 241012.

As noted within the submitted design and access statement, this submission has sought to respect the conclusions of the recent appeal decision at it has also sought to be responsive to the pre-application advice received from Mike Green, whilst the determination of the appeal was still pending.

Further justification

Substantial justification has been presented to the local planning authority with regards to the need for the new building within the submitted design and access statement, although as indicated the applicant has responded to previous concerns by reducing the size of the proposed building, which in turn has resulted in the need to scale back the agricultural operation (and therefore reducing the numbers of animals from those shown in the previous application).

The scale of this small-holding has now been reduced to more closely align with that which could be supported by the storage and operational limitations of the now proposed replacement barn. Notwithstanding this the replacement barn still relates to meeting essential needs genuinely required to support the working of the wider land and as such is therefore still for a very similar use to that which can lawfully be made of the existing one.

Clearly it has long been the intention of the applicant to reinstate the previous agricultural activity at the site and rejuvenate the land as a successful small holding employing purely organic principles, and the applicant has already undertaken and

almost completed a significant programme of both financial and time investment in the wider land to realise this.

Building size and internal space

With regard to the position of the building, the intention is for it to simply replace the existing building on essentially the same footprint. The building is sited adjacent to the residential curtilage area of land that has previously been used as a yard, with independent vehicle access from Redmoor Lane. The previous design showed one door facing into the residential curtilage and three doors, facing the agricultural land. The reduction in size from that previously proposed has meant that instead of the applicant being able to have the benefit of two separate internal areas, he will now have two compromise on the design and management of the building, and have one single space, that is to be used for a number of uses.

The reduction in animal numbers will slightly reduce the amount of space required for animal housing, and also slightly reduce the amount of floor space required for the storage of hay and feed, but it will not result in any reduction of the amount of floor space required for equipment (as the land and the boundary areas remain the same as previous). The reduction in building size and therefore animal numbers, will have no effect on the size of vegetable growing area (or indeed the amount of vegetables grown).

The numbers and types of animals to be kept at the farm are - 15 sheep, 5 rare breed goats , 3 or 4 rare breed organic beef cattle, 5 rare breed pigs and a flock of 20 hens. It is anticipated that the sheep will achieve a lambing rate of 110%, producing their lambs in March/April each calendar year, with the lambs being sold in the late summer/autumn. The goats will produce their young at a slightly lower rate than this, at around 75% and the intention is also to breed from the beef cattle. The variation in types and numbers of livestock, hens and vegetables at the farm will allow the applicant to maintain a sustainable rolling income from the agricultural enterprises throughout the year. This scale of operation will equate consistently throughout the year, alongside all other activities of maintaining the land, to in excess of the 0.5 standard labour requirement employed by DEFRA in their agricultural census and small-holding definition.

The livestock on site will be bred to sell for slaughter although some of the weaned animals may be sold to other rare breed farms. It is also the intention of the applicant to sell surplus eggs from the hens and vegetables to local retail shopping outlets and farmers markets, with initial and subsequent enquiries generating strong interest in these products.

Unlike the existing building, the proposed building has been designed to be fit for purpose with regards to modern day agricultural practises and with regards to the applicant’s specific needs, the building will fulfil storage, animal welfare and security

needs. The new building is to comprise of a single open area within its envelope, the primary purpose of which will be for the housing of animals during the greater part of the year. The goats will need to have access to shelter at all times and will be inside all year round (particularly at night time). The cattle will need to be kept inside during the worst of the winter weather (for welfare and pasture management reasons) and at various times throughout the year the building will also be used for temporary pens for lambing, calving and also during shearing and dipping time or when other specific animal welfare tasks such as inoculations or vaccinations dictate so.

In addition to the need for animal housing, there is also a need for under cover and vermin secure storage of hay and straw, organic feed, organic fertiliser and some of the farming plant, equipment and materials. Whilst there is no intention to cultivate hay on the land, the applicant does need to store hay (bought from approved organic suppliers), inside in a waterproof environment. Space will also be required for the storage of different types of feed and feed supplements for the hens, beef cattle, goats and the sheep.

It is not financially sustainable to keep and maintain permanent larger plant and equipment that may be required to carry out task such as the spreading of manure etc. and so as with the sheep dipping and sheep shearing, the applicant will employ external contractors to carry out these sorts of tasks as and when required. (These specific activities serve to demonstrate the wider economic benefits of the proposal). There is however, a need to store some smaller items of plant including a small tractor together with agricultural implements such as a small trailer, small grass topper, etc together with other ancillary agricultural tools and equipment (fencing materials and equipment, chainsaw, brush cutter, shovels, spades, wheelbarrows and general small hand tools the like) that are used on the existing land – all of which need to be kept in a secure, waterproof building.

The nature of the smallholding is such that flexibility is paramount in that the precise use of the available space will vary throughout the year primarily according to the specific animal and storage needs at a given point in time. Whilst this revised and reduced scale of building presents a challenge in this regard, the applicant is confident that by potentially reducing the number of animals it was originally intended to keep on the land, and adopting innovative management approaches to other aspects of the enterprise, the available space will prove adequate. Evidently however the applicant will need to manage the space carefully throughout the year, continually prioritising agricultural needs and activities.

It is anticipated that a floor area amounting to 30m2, will be required for the inside storage of the plant and equipment, with the remaining area of 51m2, being used for animal pens, feed and hay storage etc - although as indicated above, this will need careful management throughout the agricultural year.

The height of the building, with an eaves height of 2.975m, can be reduced a little (this height is driven by the height of the doors and then the height of building construction above), to 2.9m and the angle of the roof can be altered a little to a maximum of 15 degrees, which consequently shows a reduction in the overall ridge height to 3.724m - all generally as shown on drawing number 2410413 Rev A)

Doors

As indicated above, the floor area of the building amounts to 81.3m2, this reduced floor area has driven the need to rearrange the previously proposed door positions and door numbers (shown on drawing number 241012), with all the doors now opening onto the agricultural side of the building and with the doors being reduced in number to 3 doors. The door sizes have remained the same, being 3m (10') wide, to allow ready access for herding animals when required, but also allowing only one side of the door to be opened when needed, at 1.5m (5') wide. This width of door will also allow easy access for the small tractor and trailer when needed (these have a minimum width of 2.7m) and also access for deliveries of feed/hay/straw etc. The applicant has considered the number and positions of the doors carefully and as indicated on the submitted drawing, one of the previous 4 doors has been removed, which will allow that area of wall to be used more easily for storage etc. Whilst the building does incorporate ventilation with the 'hit and miss' boarding, the ability to open the doors independently of this will aid ventilation flows, as and when required, during times of high animal occupancy. The doors in these positions will also give the applicant flexibility of choice with the internal space management, particularly when internal animal welfare tasks are required at times when the building is already well occupied with equipment, feed, hay etc. The height of the doors, needs to allow a small tractor with rollbar fit beneath and the height shown at 2.6m is considered to be the smallest that will achieve this.

Roof Lights

The opaque roof lights are required to allow natural light into the internal areas of the building. This is important for the health and well-being of the animals inside the building and it is also important with regards to the need to manage energy costs. The reduction in the building size from that shown on the previously acceptable design (shown on drawing number 241012), has reduced the number of proposed roof lights from 10 down to 8. If required by the local planning authority, this can be adequately controlled by planning condition. The use of roof lights in a livestock building is highly recommended by DEFRA.