

Miss Claire Booth
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Your ref:
Our ref: CPG/EST/WS/3/35/8548/NS
Date: 18 December 2012

Dear Miss Booth

APPLICATION NO: 3/2012/0660
MOOR HOUSE FARM, CLITHEROE ROAD, KNOWLE GREEN
GRID REFERENCE SD 364691 437974

I refer to your consultation letter concerning the above application and have the following comments to make.

Introduction

A planning application has been submitted by Janet Dixon Town Planners Limited on behalf of Mr Roy Brown for the erection of an agricultural building and new septic tank. A site visit was made whilst the applicant and his agent, Mrs Janet Dixon, were present, and the information provided at this meeting, together with the written submissions, forms the basis of this appraisal.

Background information and previous planning applications

Lancashire County Council Corporate Property Group has previously commented on an earlier application at this site, for the erection of an agricultural building. My report in connection with this earlier application, dated 28 March 2012, is attached at Appendix 1. The current application therefore, represents a resubmission, with some amendments to the design and size of the building having now been proposed.

Agricultural land

Mr Brown explained that he still owns approximately 14 acres (5.7 hectares) of land at the application site but now also has available to him approximately 16 acres (6.5 hectares) of adjoining land, which is available on an informal grazing licence.

Wayne Selway MRICS FAAV
Land Agent
Property Group • PO Box 26 •
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In addition to the land at the application site, the applicant also explained that he still owns approximately 6 acres (2.4 hectares) of land at his address, at Hill Crest, Cumeragh Lane, Whittingham. Please note, that from our mapping system, I estimate note that the majority of the site consists of buildings, which I was told by Mr Brown are let out for commercial purposes.

Enterprise

When I last visited the site, the land was being let out, and the applicant was not undertaking any agricultural operations.

At my current visit, the applicant informed me that he now owns six pedigree Simmental pedigree calves, and also has an interest in a bull. Please note however, that these animals have not been registered in the applicant's name, and are still being looked after by the farmer from whom they were purchased. In addition to the cattle, Mr Brown told me that he also owes 30 ewes, these are again being looked after by another farmer off site. There was no documentation however to support that the applicant owns these head of stock.

From discussion with Mr Brown, he explained that it is his intention to establish a small suckler herd, rearing pedigree cattle. The application would therefore be to house these during the winter period, but also to provide a lambing facility when required, and storage for machinery.

Proposed Development

The building proposed now consists of a five bay steel portal framed building with concrete block work to the walls with stone facing and timber spaced boarding above. The roof would be constructed with steel profile sheeting.

As mentioned above the building would be used for storage of machinery and hay, and the housing of cattle and the lambing of sheep.

Assessment

The site is within an area of open countryside on which guidance is provided at policy ENV3.

From discussions with the applicant, he said that he now owns some young beef cattle, and some lambing ewes. These however are not on site, nor does the applicant have the necessary paperwork, as he explained that they will not be transferred, until the applicant has a facility in which to house the stock. The applicant does not currently carry out agricultural operations in terms of management of stock, and the applicant has limited agricultural experience. I therefore have concerns that the agricultural operations will become fully established and will be sustained by the applicant himself.

However, the area of land associated with Moor House Farm, is of a reasonable area, and will require management either via the grazing of stock, and the taking of a forage crop etc. Taking this into account, I am of the view that an agricultural building would be beneficial, and on balance consider the proposed building is therefore acceptable.

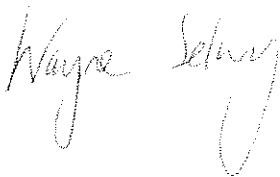
Whilst a facility may be required, I am of the opinion that the proposed building is not suitable for the intended purposes. There are a number of errors in the proposed design in terms of using the building for the intended purposes. These include: inadequate access for and to the livestock; inadequate feed areas for livestock; and no scraping passage/waste handling facilities for livestock. For example, the building inspected at the neighbouring farm, where I was told the cattle are currently kept, consisted of an open fronted elevation with an overhang and feed face.

The provision of stone cladding to the concrete block walling is not necessary, and in my opinion the height of the concrete block walling could be further increased. The walls should be single skin and a maximum eaves height of 4m would be suitable. Metal sheeting to the roof can sometimes be subject to corrosion due to condensation, and fibre cement sheeting is more commonly used. The presence of windows in the gable end is not an agricultural requirement, with natural light normally provided by way of roof lights into the building. An open fronted facility would also assist in this regard.

The site of the proposed building remains unchanged, and my comments in this regard remain the same as those in my earlier report.

I look forward to receiving a copy of your Decision Notice in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Wayne Selway'.

Wayne Selway MRICS FAAV
Land Agent
On behalf of the Assistant Director of Property