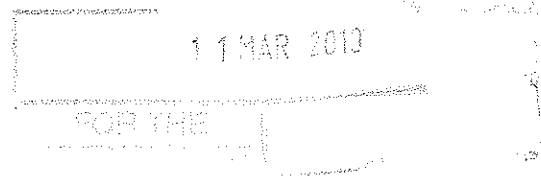


Mr Mark Baldry
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
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Tel (01772) 530731
Email wayne.selway@lancashire.gov.uk

Your ref
Our ref CPG/EST/3/10/8590
Date: 11 March 2013



Dear Mr Baldry

**APPLICATION NUMBER 3/2013/0100
ELMRIDGE FARM, ELMRIDGE LANE, CHIPPING, PR3 2NY
GRID REFERENCE SD 595 405**

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

Introduction and Previous Planning Applications

A planning application has been submitted by Mr Matthew Symons of Sedgwick Associates on behalf of Mrs C Hayhurst for the conversion of three barns into four dwellings following the demolition of existing structures and creation of an agricultural access road. A site visit was made whilst the applicant's son-in-law Mr Hesketh was present, together with the agent, and the information provided at this meeting, together with the written submissions, forms the basis of this appraisal.

Background Information

Elmridge Farm was initially rented by the applicant and her husband in the 1970s and was subsequently purchased in the following decade. The principal enterprise was a dairy herd, however the applicant also farmed beef, sheep and pigs.

Milking ceased in 2003, with the business continuing to breed and rear cattle and sheep.

Following the death of the applicant's husband, I understand that the applicant's daughter and son-in-law have taken over the running of the farm and will continue to do so. Although all the land is still owned by the applicant, there are no formal agreements in place for their occupation of the land.

Wayne Selway MRICS FAAV
Land Agent
Property Group • PO Box 26 •
County Hall • Preston • PR1 8RE

The application relates to the conversion of traditional barns into residential properties, with the associated removal of all other farm buildings at the site. These would be replaced by a new facility in a different location, which would be serviced by a proposed accessed road.

Agricultural Land

I was told by Mr Hesketh that the area of land owned by the applicant extends to approximately 130 acres (53 hectares), all of which is within a ring fence, as shown on the ownership plan submitted.

All the land is grassland, with about 60 acres (24 hectares) being mown each year for forage production.

Agricultural Enterprise

I was told on site that both cattle and sheep are reared. At the time of inspection, Mr Hesketh had approximately 70 head of beef cattle, including about 30 suckler cows, with the remaining number being young stock. I was told that the young stock are either sold as store cattle at approximately 10-12 months of age or sold at a finished weight, depending on market conditions. Mr Hesketh explained that cattle numbers can vary, however typically there are in the region of 60-100 head on site.

The sheep enterprise consists of a sheep flock of up to 120 breeding ewes. All the ewes are lambled inside in one batch in March.

Existing buildings

The buildings on site can be summarised as follows:

1. Farmhouse (I was told that this is occupied by Mr Hesketh and his family but is in poor structural condition).
2. Stone built barn with fibre cement roof with containing shippens (with hayloft above) and area used for straw storage (to be converted into two dwellings).
3. lean-to to the rear of 2. containing former shippens (not used).
4. Timber building attached to building no.2. used for calf housing if necessary.
5. Brick and slate former dairy now used as a wood store and to be converted into a dwelling (with building number 6).
6. Stone built former milking parlour now used for cattle handling.
7. Block built building attached to building no.6. containing loose box (to be demolished).
8. Concrete block building with fibre cement roof containing loose boxes including a bull pen (to be demolished).
9. Timber framed metal clad building attached to building number 8. used for both cattle housing and machinery storage (to be demolished).
10. Timber and concreted block walled building with metal roof used for containing some cubicles for young stock and used for lambing (to be demolished).

11. Steel portal framed silage building (to be moved to form part of proposed new building).
12. Timber kennel building containing cow cubicles (to be demolished).
13. Stone built barn (detached from the main farmstead and to be converted into dwelling to be occupied by Mr Hesketh and his family).

Proposed development

The proposed development includes a number of different elements, as indicated by the various plans submitted.

In essence, if planning permission is granted, the traditional buildings at the farm yard would be converted to create four residential units (including the existing farmhouse) which would have their own access (via the existing entrance). Associated with this, is the removal of all other buildings on the site, and the creation of a new agricultural building in a field to the north of the existing farmstead. This development would involve the re-use of one of the existing buildings and would also include the erection of a midden and concrete areas. As shown on the plans submitted, a new access road would be created that would serve the new farm buildings and also a new farmhouse that is intended to be created by the conversion of an existing barn (and to be occupied by Mr Hesketh).

It has been put forward by the applicant that the buildings to be converted are no longer suitable for modern agricultural practices and that the layout of the more modern buildings makes their use difficult.

Assessment

The proposed development is in an area designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty in the Adopted Local Plan, on which guidance is provided at Policy ENV1. When assessing the application, I have the following comments to make:

From my inspection, the farm is typical of many farms, in that there are both traditional and modern buildings, and those which are more modern have been erected in accordance with typical designs at the time at which they were built.

Traditional farm buildings do have limited use due to their design and the fact that farming practices have changed and more processes have become mechanized. This results in them often being unsuitable for livestock housing, and storage use being limited. From my inspection of the buildings that would be converted, it was clear that some were being utilised more than others, but any use that did exist was limited to modest storage, and in my mind were not essential to the proper running of the farm enterprises.

Other more modern buildings on the site were being fully utilised and in my mind are suitable for continued use. A major component of the proposed agricultural building

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would be formed by one of the existing buildings. Whilst some of the existing cattle housing could be improved, in my mind the site of existing buildings could be used to provide new facilities, as opposed to a completely new site, if it is considered necessary.

In my opinion, the driving force behind the proposed development is financial, i.e. the desire to obtain planning consent for four new dwellings, as opposed to any agricultural requirement in creating farm buildings on the new site.

Notwithstanding this comment, the proposed size and design of the proposed building is on balance acceptable. The height of the building is high for the intended use, which is due to fact that the building to be recycled was originally used as a silage clamp. I would also comment that the doorways on the cattle section should be adjacent to the feed face to provide for ease of mucking out etc.

Limited information has been put forward concerning the proposed midden, however the size of the midden seems to be larger than required. In my opinion, the proposed yard is also larger than required.

I would be grateful to receive a copy of your Decision Notice in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wayne Selway". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Wayne Selway MRICS FAAV
Land Agent