

Mr Colin Sharpe
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Your ref
Our ref CPG/EST/WS/3/5/8637
Date: 15th November 2013

Dear Mr Sharpe,

APPLICATION NO: 3/2013/0392
LOWER MONUBENT FARM
GRID REFERENCE SD 794 516

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 Mr Alan Kinder of Avalon Town Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs H Berry for the removal of condition no.1 (occupancy restrictions) of temporary planning permission 3/2009/0352P, to allow the dwelling to be used as a permanent residential dwelling. A site visit was made whilst the applicant and his wife 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 Property Group have been involved in a number of applications at the site, the most recent being application number 3/2009/0352P, which was granted consent on appeal. Our comments in respect of this earlier application and appeal decision are attached in appendix 1 and 2 respectively and provide useful background information concerning the circumstances surrounding the existing temporary dwelling.

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

Current Circumstances

The area of land farmed remains unchanged to that set out in our earlier report. The land rented on the farm business tenancy (70 acres/ 28 hectares) is due to expire in April 2014 and Mr Berry explained that he may not renew the tenancy.

I was informed that the applicants lambled 260 ewes this year, although 50 ewes were sold after this.

In addition to the ewes, 7 horses are kept on the site, these being 4 brood mares and 3 youngsters.

When commenting on the earlier application, we were informed that the applicants intended to establish a heifer rearing operation, however this has not been established.

The buildings on site remain unchanged. The cubicle building and proposed extension to the equestrian building to form a calf and lambing shed have not been built (granted consent under 03/2009/0350), neither has the proposed storage building (granted consent under application number 03/2009/0364).

From discussions with the applicants and their agent, I understand that the amount of agricultural contracting work undertaken has been reduced.

Assessment

Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides some guidance concerning the provision of housing in rural areas and refers to the provision of homes where there is an essential need for a rural worker.

Detailed guidance for the provision of permanent agricultural workers dwellings was also provided in Annex A of PPS 7 and in my opinion the guidance contained therein remains relevant.

Our earlier report for the temporary dwelling subject to this application was on the basis that the dwelling related to a business that was developing and enterprises that were to be established i.e. the expansion of the sheep flock and the establishment of both livery and heifer rearing enterprises.

As outlined above, whilst the sheep rearing enterprise has expanded as proposed, the livery enterprise has not been established, nor has the heifer rearing enterprise, with the associated building not having been erected. Based on the current nature and scale of operations undertaken, I do not consider there is a functional need for a worker to be readily available.

In addition, I also have concerns regarding the financial viability of the business. The existing scale of the agricultural activity does not in my opinion support a full-time worker. This concern is supported by financial information detailed in the accounts and for example the fact that some of the sheep flock were sold for financial reasons.

Mr Colin Sharpe

15 November 2013

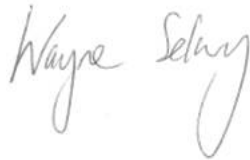
Notwithstanding the above, I note that there is currently a property to rent nearby at Closes Hall Mews, with an asking rent of £575 per month.

Summary

Whilst I appreciate the applicant's circumstances, in my opinion, I do not consider that the scale of the operations carried out from the site support a functional need for a worker to be readily available and that applicants have failed to demonstrate that the business is financially viable.

I would be grateful to receive 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

Appendix 1

Appendix 2