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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2021/0880 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 12/10/2021 |
| **Officer:** | AB |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **REFUSED** |
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| **Development Description:** | **Proposed siting of two camping pods including new access and access road.** |
| **Site Address/Location:** | **Land adj Higher Parsonage Farm Parsonage Lane Chipping PR3 2NS** |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| None received. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **LCC Highways:** |  |
| No objections. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| One objection letter has been received and raises the following:* Highway safety;
* Noise pollution.
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| **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**No relevant planning history. |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1 – Development StrategyKey Statement EN2 – LandscapeKey Statement EC1 – Business and Employment DevelopmentKey Statement EC3 – Visitor EconomyKey Statement DMI2 – Transport ConsiderationsPolicy DMG1 – General ConsiderationsPolicy DMG2 – Strategic ConsiderationsPolicy DMG3 – Transport and MobilityPolicy DME1 – Protecting Trees and WoodlandsPolicy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape ProtectionPolicy DME3 - Site and Species Protection and ConservationPolicy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local EconomyPolicy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development**National Planning Policy Framework** |
| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application site lies within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parcel of land which is the subject of this application forms part of a larger field of agricultural land which is located to the west of Parsonage Farm. Parsonage Farmhouse is Grade II Listed and is around 100 metres from the proposed development site with intervening agricultural buildings and Grade II\* Old Vicarage is a greater distance away to the north-east.To the north of the field is Parsonage Lane alongside which runs a roadside hedge for the length of the field boundary. Beyond the site to the south-east, south and west is open agricultural land. |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**Consent is sought for the siting of two camping pods including a new access and track. The pods would be of two different designs with the first measuring 3.3m x 7.2m and 3m high and the second 3.25m x 6.65m and 3m to the ridge. The pods would have a timber clad exterior and could cater for a combined total of five guests. Each pod would be sat on a gravel base.A new access from Parsonage Road is proposed and would require the removal of a section of hedgerow along the field’s northern boundary. A proposed new track would be created using two strips of dark gravel with a central grass verge.The application also proposes the planting of a new hedge along the western boundary of the field and planting of wildflower seed mix adjacent to the proposed new track.A package treatment plant would also be sited adjacent to the pods. |
| **Principle of Development**Key Statement EC1 ‘Business and Employment Development states that *“Developments that contribute to* *farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that* *promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle”.* Core Strategy Key Statement EC3 relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged. The applicant owns Parsonage Farm which is a working farm breeding 500 ewes. The applicant seeks an alternative form of income and are seeking to diversity.The proposed development is for a small-scale tourism development in the AONB. As such, it meets one of the considerations listed in Policy DMG2 (part 2).Policy DMB3 deals specifically with recreation and tourism development including six criteria to be met as follows:*1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;**2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;**3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;**4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;**5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and**6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.*In the Forest of Bowland AONB additional criteria apply as follows: -*1. The proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.**2. The site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).*Policy DMB3 requires new tourism development to be ‘*physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available’.* The development is not required in conjunction with a countryside attraction nor it is located close to an existing main settlement. It is however reasonably well-located to the cluster of buildings that are located on both sides Parsonage Lane to the east to at least be considered broadly compliant with this criterion of DMB3, although there is some physical and visual separation by virtue of the proposed developments location at the centre of an open field which will require further consideration it terms of visual and landscape impact.With regard to the additional requirements in the Forest of Bowland AONB, in general the area is not devoid of structures. In terms of demonstrating a ‘high standard of design’, these units do not reflect local vernacular style but are at least clad with natural materials.Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Listed Buildings Act) states: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. Paragraph 194 of the Framework requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected and to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As submitted, the applicant fails to acknowledge the siting of listed buildings in the locality. It is considered that due to the distance from designated heritage assets, the scale of development proposed and intervening built form, the proposals would not result in any adverse harm on the setting of these buildings. |
| **Residential Amenity**The proposed units would be over 200m from the nearest noise-sensitive building that is not in the applicants ownership. Given the pods can accommodate only five guests it is unlikely that the development would generate undue noise or disturbance. |
| **Effects Upon the Landscape/Visual Amenity**Great weight is afforded to the conservation and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB as stated in the Framework and reiterated in Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy which requires the Forest of Bowland to be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development in such areas should be of a high standard of design and should be in keeping with the character of the landscape. This is echoed in Policy DMG2 which states that, ‘*in protecting the designated area of outstanding natural beauty the Council will have regard to the economic and social well being of the area. However, the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area*…’The AONB Landscape Character Assessment categorises the site as Undulating Lowland Farmland (Whitechapel E1). Undulating Lowland Farmland landscape type is considered to be of ‘moderate’ sensitivity. It is noted that tourist related development could impact the character and quality of the landscape.The proposed camping pods are not in keeping with buildings in the immediate area which are buildings of local vernacular style. The proposed development has not been sensitivity sited. The applicant was advised that the siting and layout of the proposed development was unacceptable, including recommendations to improve the scheme, but has failed to submit any amendments.Due to its open field location, the site is open to close to mid-range public views and would be visible in the immediate area from surrounding highways and public rights of way (PROWs). It is also likely that there would be a requirement for some external lighting at the site and overspill of the use onto adjacent land given there are no boundary features proposed to contain the activities of guests.Whilst it is noted that the existing roadside hedge along Parsonage Lane would provide some screening, the proposals would still form a highly visible and irregular addition to the immediate area that can be clearly seen from other viewpoints. In addition to the visual impact of the buildings, the proposals also include the provision of a new access point and track through what is currently undeveloped pastureland. These elements would result in a further adverse visual and landscape impact. |
| **Ecology**A hedgerow survey has been submitted with the application due to the requirement to remove a 21-metre section of hedgerow along Parsonage Lane. The proposal is to translocate the hedge to satisfy sightline requirements, and this is not deemed to adversely affect the quality or value of the remaining hedge. All existing trees would be retained.It is acknowledged that the applicant proposes some hedgerow and wildflower planting which would be of some modest ecological benefit although no consideration has been given to ecological impacts arising from noise/light. Nonetheless, any limited ecological benefits would be insufficient to overcome the identified visual and landscape harm. |
| **Highways**The applicant is supported by a Transport Statement which has advised the proposed site access design. The County Highways Officer has noted that there are some shortfalls, 1) in the access width due to the position of two existing trees and 2) car parking spaces. However, the County Surveyor has raised no objection due to the small-scale nature of the development and the access meets the sightline requirements. |
| **Conclusion**Having regard to the above, it is considered that the development would result in harm to the visual appearance and character of the area which is designated for its scenic beauty and would therefore be contrary to Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 of the Core Strategy.Accordingly, the application should be refused. |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: | That planning consent be refused for the following reasons: |
| 1. The proposed development, by virtue of its siting, layout and design, would form a prominent and incongruous feature that would be detrimental to the visual amenity and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policy DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 and paragraph 172 of the NPPF.
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