

From: [REDACTED] >

Sent: 03 March 2021 19:33

To: Planning <planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk>

Subject: Planning Application 3/2021/0077 - The Smithy, Birks Brow - OBJECTION

Subject: Planning Application 3/2021/0077, Erection of a single lodge on agricultural land and formation of improved access (resubmission of 3/2019/0773)

Dear Mr Birkett,

I strongly object to the above Planning Application on the following grounds:

It is not the Planning Department's fault that the applicant needs somewhere temporary to live while they renovate their house. The applicant's personal reasons are not a material planning consideration. No-one should be allowed to permanently despoil a field just because they need alternative accommodation. Greenbank Quarry and Beacon Fell View caravan site are conveniently located should the applicant require somewhere temporary. I can even provide contact details for a temporary short-term let in Longridge.

Although the applicant is applying for one lodge, according to the following paragraphs in the Planning Statement (below), the applicant eventually intends to create a tourism business consisting of additional lodges, cabins, pods, caravans and tents. This "plan/vision" would, in time, result in the loss of the whole field.

Planning statement:

1.0 Property and site

"..... There is also a growing market for artists, bird watchers and photography enthusiasts. These will form the main target groups for the business."

Page 7 - Touring sites in the Longridge and Forest of Bowland Area

"..... Of the main sites within the AONB most are closed sites linked to Caravan Club Membership. **The Smithy will be an open site which will accept both caravans and tents from non- affiliated visitors, and in addition the pods and cabins will be available.**"

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"..... The lodge will be eased into the natural undulation of the land to minimise impact and mirror that created by the Greenbank Quarry development."

Greenbank Quarry development is a blight on the southern side of Longridge fell. Along with Brows Farm campsite and Beacon Fell View Holiday Park it can be seen from far and wide in the Ribble Valley. They are all eyesores (see attached photos taken from Lower Road, Longridge near the Corporation Arms).

Although planning permission has never been sought, lodges at Greenbank Quarry are used as permanent residential dwellings, not as holiday homes for which permission was granted (various administrative methods get around conditions set for holiday use only). A quick search on RVBC planning website shows at least 48 applications seeking permission to change from approved holiday lets to permanent residential, most of which were granted. This indicates that there is not a great demand for holiday homes in this area.

The current trend for staycation holidays is temporary whilst Covid restrictions remain in place. As soon as restrictions are lifted people will return to foreign travel.

The field is on an apex, thus in short and medium distance views any structure would be intrusive due to its exposed position. The erection of a lodge of this type would result in a finished project which would be completely out of character for the area. The materials of construction are at odds with all other properties in the AONB. The surrounding area is characterised by attractive undulating countryside and the introduction of lodges/pods/cabins/caravans/tents would cause harm to the scenic beauty of the landscape. If this application is approved, it will set a precedence for other campsites to litter the Bowland fells within the AONB.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy para 3.17 states in order to achieve successful tourism it is necessary to ensure that the reason people visit the area is not destroyed.

Lighting:

Development of this field would require lighting. Such lighting would be detrimental to the "dark skies" in the AONB.

Screening:

The applicant has stated that landscaping using native species and hedgerows will be incorporated into the site to screen the development. Notwithstanding this, the further plans for this business would leave limited space for landscaping in between the site and the surrounding area that could effectively screen the development from the Loud valley and wider AONB. Soft landscaping to the north and south would not sufficiently mitigate the harm caused by the proposed development. Therefore, even with some landscaping the development would cause considerable visual harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.

Given the wonderful views at this location, screening would defeat the purpose and any screening will gradually disappear after the building work is completed. If, as the statement implies, they intend to add additional structures to the field these cannot all be "partially hidden" and domestic garden furniture, BBQs, sitting areas etc, would not be in keeping with the surrounding area. By the time they've allowed for extra car parking spaces and shower/WC facilities

for caravans and tents there will be very little space left to "emulate Butterfly Conservation" or "keep livestock" as mentioned in their Statement Supplement.

THREAT!

The applicant's threat (in the Planning Statement Supplement) to place "a horrible looking old static caravan plonked on bricks" as an alternative should not be a reason for the planning department to approve something temporary nor permanent.

The applicant has stated their house is facing the field they wish to develop so they would not want to look out on an eyesore. A "horrible caravan" would therefore quickly be removed when they are reinstalled in their newly renovated house.

The applicant states he wants a business to fund his retirement. Such requirements are fleeting because at some point people leave/move on, but development on an agricultural field is permanent and will never be reversed.

The applicant advises that the land is no longer viable as an agricultural unit but local farmers and young farmers just starting out are always looking to rent small pieces of local grazing land. The Forest of Bowland AONB Hay Time hay meadow restoration project gives help and advice on how to turn a redundant field into a wildflower meadow which would be a more suitable use for this site. <https://www.forestofbowland.com/Hay-Time-Project>

Given the location of the field, a lodge would be an incongruous feature to the detriment of visual amenity thereby prejudicing the aims and enhancement of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

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Attached:

One photo showing Greenbank Quarry lodges together with Brows Farm lodges

One photo showing Beacon Fell View Holiday Park



