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Email: Adam.Birkett@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Planning Officer: Adam Birkett

Planning Application Ref: 3/2016/0783

Description of Development: Demolition of an existing timber framed building and erection of a general purpose agricultural building

Site Address: Back Lane Farm, Back Lane, Chipping, PR3 2QA

Dear Adam,

We have reviewed the above planning application that was submitted by Mr Colin Sharpe of Gary Hoerty Associates on behalf of the applicant Mrs K Potter for the demolition of an existing timber framed building and erection of a general purpose agricultural building and erection of a general purpose agricultural building at Back Lane Farm, Back Lane, Chipping, PR3 2QA. This response is based upon the written information received for the planning application and the site photographs provided by Ribble Valley Council. ADAS has not conducted a separate site visit. The applicant's agent in their Supporting Statement explains that the main need for the proposed building is for livestock housing and general storage. The agent has identified that the livestock will consist of 20 Breeding Ewes and 2 Breeding Sows and Progeny.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable development. It further states that local plans should promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.

Ribble Valley Council

Core Strategy (Adopted December 2014)

Key Statement EN2: Landscape – The landscape character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.

As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.

Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development – Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre viability will be supported in principle.

Policy DMG1: General Considerations – In determining planning applications, all development must:

Design

1. Be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 building in context principles (from the CABE/English Heritage building in context toolkit).
2. Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and buildings materials
3. Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities...

Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations – ...Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting...

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...Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. The AONB management plan should be considered and will be used by the Council in determining planning applications...

Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection – Development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features...

The Council will seek, wherever possible, to enhance the local landscape in line with its key statements and development strategy. In applying this policy reference will be made to a variety of guidance including the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2010 and AONB Management Plan. Also the Council will take into account the potential cumulative impacts of development in areas where development has already taken place.

Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy – Proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle. Development proposals will be determined in accord with the Core Strategy and detailed policies of the LDF as appropriate.

Agricultural Buildings and Roads Supplementary Planning Guidance (adopted March 1997)

Paragraph 1.5 – Permission will not be granted nor prior approval given for the erection of agricultural buildings where by reason of siting, design or external appearance the building would have a seriously detrimental impact on the visual character of the areas. In the case of full applications the impact on any adjacent residential property will also be seen as a material consideration.

Paragraph 3.1 – Where the proposal is within the AONB it is consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area...

Paragraph 3.3 – The building or development in terms of scale, design choice and colour of materials is sympathetic to its surroundings...

Paragraph 3.6 – Maximum use shall have been made of all existing available buildings...

Paragraph 4.2 – Agricultural buildings must be designed for agricultural purposes and if carefully designed need not harm the appearance of the countryside...

Agricultural Consultants Appraisal:

The proposal is to knock down an existing building, which I have measured as 36 m² with a new steel framed building measuring just over 170 m². My first thoughts are that the increase in size seems excessive. The applicant states that the building is proposed to house 20 ewes and 2 rare breed sows and their progeny, straw and hay as well as a tractor and topper. (The pigs are currently not on the farm).

The 20 breeding ewes with lambs will require 2ha of land based on the standard stocking rate on lowland grass of 10 ewes and lambs per forage hectare.

The rare breed pigs are normally well suited to living outdoors, but they do require access to shelter and dry bedding. This could easily be achieved with pig arks. Two sows and progeny will require approx. 0.4 ha of land to forage around. They will potentially need supplementary feeding as they will tend to root up the grass and destroy the cover as they follow their natural foraging instincts. It would not be normal to house rare breed pigs all year round.

The farm is 2ha in size and the 20 ewes will require all the grass for grazing, which leaves no land available for the pigs to forage on.

As far as the building is concerned the requirements to provide accommodation for sheep is basically over the lambing period, which is about 1 month out of the 12. Based on standard data of 1.48 to 2.32 m² for a ewe and lambs the business would require only 30-47 m² for the sheep enterprise.

The applicant just states that the building will house two sows and progeny. However the housing requirements of pigs is very much dependant on how long they will be kept. I advise the Council to query whether the sows are being used to breed pigs that will be sold as weaners or sold as fat for pork, as the required area alters depending on how long they are being kept. As shown below:

- Pigs require 3.0-3.5 m² per sow so the sows need 6-7 m² of housing.
- The progeny aged 6-12 weeks will need 0.2-0.3 m² /pig with a litter of 11 pigs, the litters from 2 sows will require 4.4 – 6.6 m² of floor.

- Bacon/pork pigs need 0.6-0.9 m₂ per pig. So a litters from 2 sows of 22 pigs will require 13.2 – 19.8 m₂ floor area.

In summary the livestock will require the following floor area in a building if the Pig Ark option is not taken up:

- Ewes and Lambs: 47 m₂ for 1 month only
 - 2 sows + progeny sold at 12 weeks: 14 m₂
- OR
- 2 sows + progeny sold as fat as Pork at 150 days old: 27 m₂

Therefore the total livestock need for 1 month of the year is 74m₂ and for most of the year they would only need 27m₂ of floor area. Adding 30% extra for access, the maximum floor area for the building would be 96m₂ for stock for 1 month of the year and 36m₂ for the rest of the year. The standard modern tractor is 2m wide and 5m in length, so allowing for room around it you would require around 35m₂ for a tractor and a topper will require a further 10 m₂.

Given the pigs are not on the land at present and the sheep will only be housed for 1 month of the year a building of 100m₂ in area will be sufficient for the farm and if pigs are introduced then pig arks will be a better option for rare breed pigs, which are robust and tend to perform better outdoors with arks to provide the shelter.

Looking closely at the plans submitted there are two sheep pens 4.6 x 2.486m each which is 13m₂ for each pen or 26m₂ for the two pens - just about enough for the sheep for a month.

The pig pen detailed is 2.95m x 4.6m = 13.57 m₂ so the business can only be dealing with sows and then selling the progeny at 12 weeks as weaners.

The feed passage down the middle of the building is 3.3m wide which is wide enough for the tractor to be left parked in and still allow the stock access to food as they will not reach out of the pens more than 30cm or so. The feed passage between the pig and sheep pen and between the hay/straw and sheep pen is 2m wide, which is wider than necessary.

The hay storage area is 13m₂ and based on a m³ being 6 conventional bales and a conventional bale being 0.36m h x 0.46m w x 1.0m l in size there will be 26 bales in the floor area and with a 2.6m height to the eaves this area will hold 7 layers of bales = 182 bales = approx. 4.5 tonne.

My conclusion is that the business probably does not have enough land to have the sheep and pigs outdoors so the pigs when purchased would have to be housed all year. Clarification is required on this from the applicant as to how the pigs are to be managed.

The plan of the building with the storage areas etc. marked on would suggest that a building with one less bay and both doors opening outwards would be sufficient. This means that a building of approx. 14m x 9m or 126 m₂ would be more than adequate to serve their needs.

Planning Consultants Appraisal:

Planning policy does not require the applicants to carry out agricultural need justifications for farm buildings or to provide particular evidence to substantiate the need for the building. However, to be in line with planning policies, Ribble Valley Council would need to be satisfied that the building would be for an agricultural use as other uses would not be afforded the same support in this location in terms of planning policy justification.

The site of the proposed development is located within the open countryside and in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), therefore consideration should be given to policy that covers development within the open countryside and the AONB. Policies contained within the Core Strategy advise that development should protect, conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting (EN2, DMG1, DMG2).

Notwithstanding this, the proposed building's appearance may be considered to be agricultural. It is also considered that the proposed materials also appear to be in keeping with its intended use. However, in terms of scale in relation to the existing timber building which is to be replaced, the size of the proposed building is a significant increase. My agricultural consultant colleague, has explained in their agricultural appraisal, that the agricultural needs of the farm unit can be met by a smaller building, which would be sufficient to meet the required needs. Therefore, the Council is advised to request that the applicant should consider reducing the size of the proposed building.

Policy DMG1 of the adopted Core Strategy advises that development proposals should consider density, layout and relationship between buildings and existing amenities. It is therefore important to consider the proposed building's location within proximity of existing residential dwellings and in consideration of the buildings use to house livestock, in particular pigs. It can be seen that there are a number of existing residential dwellings located between distances of approximately 150 to 300 metres to the location of the proposed agricultural building, as well as the existing farm dwelling within the ownership boundary which sits at a distance of approximately 45m to the proposed agricultural building.

The Agricultural Buildings and Roads Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) paragraph 3.6 advises that maximum use should be made of all existing available buildings, a review of the provided site photos shows a further building to the rear of the stable block as well as the existing timber building that is proposed to be demolished. The Council should be satisfied that all existing available buildings have been sufficiently used and there are no alternative options available for the proposed uses.

Summary:

The agricultural consultant in their response explains that a smaller sized building would be sufficient to meet the required need of the agricultural unit. The Council need to determine the weight attributed to the above advice and the extent to which the proposed building actually complies with their adopted planning policies regarding such development in rural areas and the AONB. We consider that the need for the agricultural unit can be satisfied by a smaller sized agricultural building.

NB. ADAS would always advise that on receipt of applications for general farm buildings or in this case for applications considering the rearing of pigs, the Council considers whether they would determine the application differently if it was to be used for the intensive rearing of pigs. **We would not suggest that there are any such intentions in this case**, but where locations are potentially sensitive, ADAS would advise considering a planning condition preventing intensive pig keeping in agricultural buildings without a separate approval.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Watson and Grace Lockley

Agricultural Consultant and Graduate Planning Consultant