

Application No: 19/5765C

Location: LAND TO THE WEST OF, PEXALL ROAD, NORTH RODE

Proposal: Approval of Reserved Matters for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following outline approval 19/0739C - Outline application for an agricultural workers dwelling (permanent)

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Platt

Expiry Date: 07-Feb-2020

SUMMARY

Outline planning permission was granted for the construction of an agricultural worker's dwelling with all matters reserved. This current application seeks approval for the reserved matters: access, scale, appearance layout and landscaping.

It is considered that the proposed dwelling would be at the very upper limits of what would be acceptable in terms of scale to meet policy PG 6. On balance, the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions:

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REPORT

The application for outline planning permission was considered at the Northern Planning Committee in June 2019. At this time, members requested any subsequent reserved matters application also be considered by the Northern Planning Committee.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site lies within the open countryside as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. The site currently comprises an open field used for grazing and a dirt access track. Planning permission and prior approval have been granted for agricultural buildings on the site. Works are underway on site to construct these buildings.

There are hedgerows along the road boundaries.

There is an existing field access onto Pexall Road.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks approval for the matters reserved by outline planning permission (19/07290C) – access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

19/4290C – withdrawn – 4 December 2019 (this was withdrawn following the officer's report recommending refusal)

Reserved matters for access, appearance, landscaping, layout, scale relating to planning application 19/0739C - Outline application for an agricultural workers dwelling (permanent)

19/0739C – approved subject to conditions - 6 August 2019

Outline application for an agricultural workers dwelling (permanent)

19/0706M – prior approval not required – 5 March 2019

Access track

18/3787C – approved – 26 September 2018

Erection of an agricultural building

18/3072C – prior approval not required – 28 June 2018

Prior notification of agricultural storage building

15/4315M – refused – 18 November 2015

Outline application for the erection of an agricultural worker's dwelling

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

PG 2 – Settlement Hierarchy

PG 6 – Open Countryside

SD 1 – Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD 2 – Sustainable Development Principles

EG 2 – Rural Economy

SE 1 – Design

SE 3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE 4 – The Landscape

SE 5 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

CO 1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP)

DC6 – Circulation and Access (new development)

DC8 – Landscaping for new developments

DC9 – Tree Protection

DC23 – Green Belt and countryside – permanent agricultural dwellings

NE11 – Habitats

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS EXTERNAL TO PLANNING

North Rode Parish Council

The Parish Council is supportive of the applicants requiring a family house but is concerned that the comments made by the planning officer have not been addressed in the amended plans. The new farmhouse should fit in with the rural setting. The Parish Council welcome the use of Cheshire brick, stone lintels and Welsh slate, which are traditionally used in the North Rode area.

The removal of two of the four gables is welcomed. However, there are concerns about the type of gable being proposed. However, the gables within the surrounding area are much simpler. Using this type of gable would marry the house in the immediate locality and produce a less steep slope, again more in keeping with traditional local structures.

The reduction in ridge height would be welcomed, as it would reduce the steepness of the roof and dominating aspect of the surrounding landscape. The provision of the access, parking and turning areas could be controlled by a condition, requiring their provision before occupation.

Conditions should be included requiring landscaping, the removal of lodge and concrete pad on occupancy of the house and an agricultural occupancy condition.

Local Ward Councillor – Councillor Smetham

The applicant has obligingly altered what seemed a very good proposal to accommodate a certain view of what should be a farm business combined with a home.

There are a variety of similarly designed farmhouses in the locality, large and small.

This new application appears smaller and less dominating than some other properties nearby.

It will be suitable for the purpose that has been proposed and for the locality in which it will sit.

The application should be approved without further delay.

Highways

No objections – sufficient parking and turning areas are provided within the site. Please include an informative regarding the need for a Section 184 Agreement to provide a new vehicular crossing.

Flood Risk Management

No comments as none of the matters reserved relate to Flood Risk. No objection provided the developer considers the hierarchy of drainage when constructing a drainage strategy.

REPRESENTATIONS

One received to date. The points raised are summarised as follows:

- Design needs more consideration, with reduction in glazing and simplified roof
- Overall height reduction should be clarified
- Concerns regarding lack of planting – existing site has few mature trees, tree planting and additional hedging should be required

The consultation period is due to expire on 10th February 2020. Any representations received before or on this date will be considered and reported to the Committee, either by written or verbal update.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

Outline planning permission 19/0739C established the principle of an agricultural worker's dwelling on the site. It is not the purpose of this report to consider the merits of providing an agricultural workers dwelling on the site. The key issues to consider are the detailed reserved matters relating to access, scale, appearance, landscaping and layout.

Access

MBLP policy DC6 requires new developments to provide safe and convenient access for vehicles and pedestrians, as well as providing adequate parking and turning for vehicles.

The proposed plans show the new dwelling to use the proposed farm access, approved under prior approval 19/0706M.

Highways have been consulted on the application. They have raised no objection to the proposed access arrangements, confirming that there would be sufficient space on the site to accommodate parking and turning areas.

The provision of the access, parking and turning areas could be controlled by a condition, requiring their provision before occupation.

Scale

The scheme has been revised following withdrawn application 19/4290C, with the overall height reduced by approximately 0.3m. There have been no changes in terms of the floor space proposed. However, two of the gables proposed have also been omitted.

CELPs policy PG 6 deals with the Open Countryside. The key objective of this policy is the preservation of the countryside.

It sets out the types of development, which may be carried out in the open countryside and includes development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture. MBLP policy DC23 sets out the criteria which must be met for permission to be granted for a new dwelling within the countryside.

Planning permission 19/0790C established the principle of a dwelling on the site. However, the impact of the development on the wider countryside needs to be considered and balanced against the needs of the farm, and whether a dwelling of the size proposed is essential to the working of the farm.

The proposed dwelling would have a floor area of around 175sqm. A detached double garage is also proposed, adding a further 29sqm. The ground floor of the dwelling would provide the following accommodation: kitchen/living room, snug, WC, farm office, boot room and shower room. At first floor there would be four bedrooms, an ensuite and a bathroom. Around 15sqm of the internal floor space would be for purposes directly linked to the farm (office, boot room and shower room).

While MBLP policy DC23 does not specifically refer for a need for the dwelling to be commensurate to the holding, CELPS policy PG 6 does require the development to be essential for the purposes of agriculture.

Emerging SAPDP planning policy RUR 3 relates to agricultural worker's dwellings. This requires the size and siting of the dwelling to be strictly commensurate with the existing functional need and states that new dwellings should not significantly exceed the gross internal floor space for the intended number of bedrooms. For a four bedroom property, the guideline figure is between 90 and 130sqm.

The supporting information advises that larger dwellings will be more expensive from the outset. If the dwelling is outside of the range affordable by the local workforce, this could undermine the purpose of the restrictive occupancy condition.

As a draft policy, which has not yet passed examination, it can only be attributed limited weight. It does however give an indication of the direction of travel and sets out the reasons why dwellings approved for agricultural workers should be commensurate to the needs of the holding.

The applicant has argued that the proposed dwelling is required to meet the essential need of the established farming enterprise that is being relocated from New Pastures Farm. They have argued that the proposed dwelling would provide accommodation commensurate with the role of the farm manager with a young family. It is claimed that a family sized dwelling would be needed to attract a stockman of suitable experience. It is also of note that the dwelling would be the only dwelling serving the relocated holding.

In support of their case, they have provided a number of appeal decisions, where agricultural dwellings of a similar or larger size were allowed. However, full details of these cases or specific site circumstances for each of these appeals have not been provided. It is not known whether the needs of the applicant's farm are comparable to the cases put forward. In any case, all applications have to be judged on their own merits.

It is acknowledged that a family sized dwelling would be needed to attract a skilled worker. Despite the changes, the proposed dwelling would still be sizeable and there is no reduction in floor space over the scheme, previously recommended for refusal, but withdrawn prior to committee. That being said, the removal of the two gables and the reduction in height has

achieved a slight reduction in volume and would also help to reduce the perceived massing and scale of the proposed dwelling.

Additionally, the applicants have provided financial details to show that the proposed dwelling would not harm the viability of the holding in the long run.

The proposal would not meet the floor area sizes set out within the draft emerging local plan policy. However, it is considered that the changes made have reduced the overall scale of the building to a level which is just about compliant with CELPS policy PG 6. Conditions removing permitted development rights and restricting the dwelling to an agricultural worker were imposed on the outline permission and do not need to be duplicated.

Appearance

CELPS policy SE 1 states that development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings. It seeks to ensure design solutions achieve a sense of place by protecting and enhance the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements.

Amongst other criteria, policy SD2 of the CELPS also expects all development to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of:

- a. Height, scale, form and grouping;
- b. Choice of materials;
- c. External design features;
- d. Massing of development - the balance between built form and green/public spaces;
- e. Green infrastructure; and
- f. Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood

This is also reiterated within NPPF paragraph 127, which requires developments to be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

The application site is surrounded by open fields. Dwellings within the surrounding area appear as incidental features, often surrounded by agricultural buildings as a result of their origins as farmhouses.

These properties have a simple and uncomplicated plan form, predominately rectangular or T' shaped. Materials within the surrounding area are generally Cheshire brick and slate.

The design of the proposed dwelling has been amended following the withdrawn application, with two of the four gables removed and the overall design simplified.

On balance, subject to materials, the proposed design would be sufficiently simple to reflect the character and appearance of development in the surrounding area.

The proposal would comply with CELPS policies SD 2 and SE 1 and NPPF paragraph 127.

Layout

The proposed plans show the proposed dwelling to be located within the northernmost part of the plot, with the detached garage in the southern corner. The proposed layout is considered to be acceptable.

Landscaping

CELPs policy SE 3 relates to biodiversity and geodiversity. It requires all developments to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity. Subject to condition requiring ecological enhancements, the proposal would comply with policy SE 3.

The applicant has confirmed that none of the existing hedgerows around the site would be removed as part of the proposal. There are no trees either within or adjacent to the site

The proposal includes a landscape plan, which shows a native hedge. Details have been provided of the species. However, no details have been included regarding maintenance or any planting within the site. Full details of landscaping will be required by condition.

Concerns have been raised regarding the lack of tree planting around the wider site. While this is in the applicant's ownership, it would not be proportionate to require tree planting around other land in their ownership.

CONCLUSIONS

Outline planning permission was granted for the construction of an agricultural worker's dwelling. This application was approved with all matters reserved. This current application seeks approval for the reserved matters: access, scale, appearance layout and landscaping. It is considered that the proposed dwelling would be at the very upper limits of what would be acceptable in terms of scale to meet policy PG 6. On balance, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Works to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans
3. Details of finished levels (prior to commencement)
4. Details of materials
5. Provision of parking area (prior to occupation)
6. Submission of landscaping scheme (prior to occupation)
7. Implementation of landscaping scheme

