

The proposed development at Moss Edge Farm (number 2023/91342) is contrary to paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework as there are no relevant circumstances that would justify the development of isolated homes in the countryside. The Peak District National Park have previously commented on the negative impact of increasing urbanisation (mostly housing) and this development is extremely close to the Parks boundary. The development with its accompanying parking spaces, bin storage and gardens would be detrimental to the Park landscape which Local authorities are obliged to have regard to (Section 65 of the Environment Act 1995). The proposal of three additional properties would increase light pollution in an intrinsically dark landscape and be conspicuously out of keeping with local nocturnal light levels.

Transport and highways

Class Q approval asks if the proposal is “Impractical or undesirable” and asks the local planning authority to apply a reasonable ordinary meaning of those words and includes consideration of accessibility.

The proposed development is accessed by a private road which already has 5 dwellings on it and it is usually the case that one private road can only provide access to 5 dwellings. The access road is to give access to the farmhouse for residential purposes but the access to the barns and pole barn is only for agricultural purposes. If the agricultural buildings were developed into additional residential units they would not have automatic access down the road as per the case of Parker v Roberts [2019] EWCA Civ 121.

The lane coming down from Moss Edge Farm is steep, north facing with over hanging trees is difficult to access in winter or wet weather, despite the recent work done on it. The proposal states that the owners have a snow plough and will use this as needed. This fails to take account of the fact that the properties are likely to be sold in the future and is in effect saying that the access can be so difficult in some conditions that any future owners will need a snow plough.

Moss Edge Farm and the barns are approximately 801 metres from the highway.

There are no passing places at the bottom of the private lane access where it meets the highway (Acre Lane, Hollin Brigg Lane, Woodhouse Lane). The passing places on the proposed plans would be inadequate to take the increased volume of traffic which would include residents' cars, delivery vehicles etc. Any additional passing places will further damage the woodland and be detrimental to the wildlife in it.

The private lane used to access the development is maintained to its current standard so as to be consistent with the surrounding greenbelt and allow surface water drainage. The private lane width ranges from 3m 11cm at the entrance narrowing at the garage buildings to 2m 70cm (verge to verge) and so is not suitable for all emergency vehicles.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that permission may be refused if the development is ‘impractical’ or ‘undesirable’. Though not defined in the regulations, the local planning authority should apply a reasonable ordinary dictionary meaning in making any judgement. ‘Impractical’ reflects location and siting which would ‘not be sensible or realistic’ and ‘undesirable’ reflects that which would be ‘harmful or objectionable’.

The proposed development is impractical in that it does not have adequate access for three additional dwellings and undesirable due to its negative impact on the surrounding area, including the national park, and therefore does not meet the criteria for a class Q permitted development.